



CASA of Tulare County
Court Appointed Special Advocates **FOR CHILDREN**
www.CASATulareCo.org

VOICES FOR THE VOICELESS

News & Updates from CASA of Tulare County



We've heard it many times that it takes a community to raise a child. In these circumstances, that concept is far more literal. The children in foster care often are without family, or have been abandoned by their family, by no fault of their own. We,

abuse and homelessness. Many foster youth, through traumas they experience and the lack of healthy adult figures to look up to, go on to be incarcerated, addicted to a substance of some kind, and/or homeless before the age of 21.

Starting here, while they still have a chance to see how healthy adults function and receive motivation and encouragement to excel beyond the statistics, a CASA will be the story changing variable that helps them succeed. By donating to CASA of Tulare County, you are assisting CASA's throughout the county to be that story changer the child needs.

CASA of Tulare County, have committed ourselves to gather our community to assist these children, our most vulnerable population and the future of our community. We are a non-profit organization and our entire focus is finding volunteers with the emotional strength, commitment, and compassion to care for our kids.

This program is intended to not just raise financial support, but also to spread awareness. You have a circle of influence that we may not, but when you partner with us, your circle of influence is added to ours. Since we service children all over Tulare County, it is important that we reach the entire county, but we can't do it by ourselves.

This takes finances from a variety of angles. From keeping staff on-site to support and walk with our volunteers through these difficult cases, staff that is willing and able to carry the load of our many kids waitlisted for a CASA volunteer, having office space for staff and training purposes, spreading the word far and wide throughout Tulare County, and so much more, very little is free for a non-profit.

Gather your team, your friends, family, co-workers, and anyone you may know, to help us spread the word about the children who are hurting right now, right here in Tulare County, and how having a CASA Volunteer by their side is beneficial.

This is why we need YOU. As a member of this community, you may have seen a rise in substance

Together we can change a child's story.

LET'S BE STORY CHANGERS!

Stay tuned for our new
holiday fundraiser:

RAISE 4 CASA

YOU can sponsor a child
to have an advocate that
speaks on their behalf.
More details to come.

TULARE COUNTY RISE UP!

www.CASATulareCo.org





Message from the Executive Director

We celebrate October, because it brings about change. There is a change in the weather, and a change in preparations for the oncoming holiday season. As we consider these changes, I have been self-reflecting a lot, and during these reflections I focused on the word humility. Humility is the “recognition of one’s own importance or standing”. It is in this self-awareness that I took notice that I’m no better than the person next to me or across from me. We are all one entity, one fist, one body, and together we can do mighty things – like protect our children in the masses. Humility is the quality that is most natural, but at times hard to demonstrate. It can be learned to a certain degree, but authentic humility is hard to duplicate.

I’m mindful and appreciative of the amount of support and effort afforded to us as an organization. We could not do what we do without our terrific volunteers, staff, our partners in the faith-based community, civic groups, businesses, charitable foundations and corporate giving individuals. Often when trying to thank everyone, someone inadvertently gets left out. If you are reading this, you have helped us start, sustain and grow. Please accept our heartfelt thanks. The volunteer support, goods, services, and financial support by the community clearly demonstrates how the community feels about the importance of having CASA in their communities.

I am asked daily “What about the children? How can I volunteer?” We are blessed by the number of individuals who have considered or joined us in a volunteer capacity. If time does not allow you to sign-up to volunteer, maybe consider volunteering your time by speaking on behalf of CASA in your church/communities, or by-passing out pamphlets, hosting an event at your home, etc. There are many ways that you could volunteer with CASA. Please consider the role you can play alongside our organization creatively, recognizing that we’re all very different with much to offer.

Moreover, our website is also currently undergoing major changes, which you will notice as you browse through it. Thanks to the great work of our Marketing Coordinator, Ms. Melissa Murphy, we have been able to continue providing a website that is interesting, informational and resourceful. Please send us your comments on how we can improve our website and the ways you may use it to further promote CASA throughout the region or community.

In closing, your donations support our mission to be the doorway to Advocacy for the abused and neglected kids of Tulare County. Our mission is to provide a basic safety net and most importantly an advocate who will speak up and speak out on their behalf. Together we have done so much, but there is much more to do. We do what we can today, we focus on tomorrow, and we plan for a future where kids have a healthy home life and are given the love and resources to help them grow into upstanding individuals with hopes and dreams.

Please, find our movie theaters promotional videos in both Visalia Theaters. Also, look for our Billboard Ad’s; 1. SR 137 N/L e/o Lover’s Lane East Face 2. Ave 328 SL 106’ e/o Road 159, Ivanhoe /W– East & West Faces 3. Mirage Highway WL s/o Lindsey City Limits, Lindsey – North & South Face.

Blessings, and many thanks for your support,

Eric D. Johnson, Executive Director

0-5 CASA’s

From infancy to 5-years-old, a child forms their most basic learned understanding of the world around us. They learn to rely on the adults that care for them and this later teaches the child to trust and evaluate life a certain way. When our youngest ones lack trust in adults, they fall victim to slowed developmental growth, increased acting out, and the inability to cope under pressure.

44% of the children appointed to CASA of Tulare County are between the ages of 0 and 5-years-old. When the judge appoints CASA to a case, it doesn’t mean the child instantly has a CASA volunteer in their lives. Currently, 104 children from 0-5 are waitlisted for a CASA volunteer, nearly half of our entire waitlist of children from 0 to aging out of care!

Programs like the Child Find Campaign recently introduced to the Tulare County Office of Education/Special Education Local Planning Area, assist adult figures who care for our 0-5 population.

We all want to ensure that every child has the help they need, and children with special needs often need just a little more. “Child Find” helps to ensure every child with a disability has the help and support they need to grow and thrive. The program accepts referrals and screens children who may have a disability at no cost, and in turn refers the child to the necessary educational facility for evaluation and/or services.

A referral to Child Find may be made by a parent or by any person concerned about a child. Parent involvement and agreement is obtained prior to any further action. Information is confidential and the privacy of children and parents is protected.

If you know of a child who has one or more of the following disabilities (or you suspect a child has a disability) please let them know.

*autism
blindness or vision impairment
deafness or hearing impairment
developmental disability (mental retardation)
learning disability
physical or orthopedic disability
speech/language difficulty*

For more information please call the Child Find Program at (559) 730-2910 Ext.5125 or visit your local school.

Family Connections

(Please note: the names listed in this story have been changed for anonymity's sake, but the story itself is true nonetheless.)

We'd love to celebrate the story of Stephanie, a 13-year-old female who lost her mother when she was 4-years-old. Stephanie was moved and taken into the care of various family members until she ended up with her eldest sister, Jane, when she was 7-years-old. Unfortunately, this didn't last long, as the sister was young herself and felt it was only necessary to surrender her younger sister to the system that could hopefully better care for and protect Stephanie.

Jane, when speaking to the team, stated that she was caught off guard when Stephanie was placed in her care and noted that by the time Stephanie was in her teenage years, in her words, was "out of control." Jane felt she had no choice but to surrender her sister to the agency and reported that she was no longer able to care for her sister's needs.

Jane had no legal standing, but desired to see her sister cared for. Their mother had passed unexpectedly, leaving no legal guardianship in place. The case was referred to the Family Connections Program in hopes that the team could find life-long connections with family members, and a support system that would be there for the youth for years to come.

In this case, the Family Connections Program was not only able to locate family outside of Stephanie and Jane's reach, but also assist in mending relationships once severed during their loved one's passing.

At this time, Stephanie has chosen to stay with her current resource parents while maintaining the connection created with her extended family. The resource parents are very supportive of the Family Connections Program. From the time this case started, our team has been able to connect the youth to her maternal grandmother, maternal aunt, 3 half siblings, and 4 cousins.

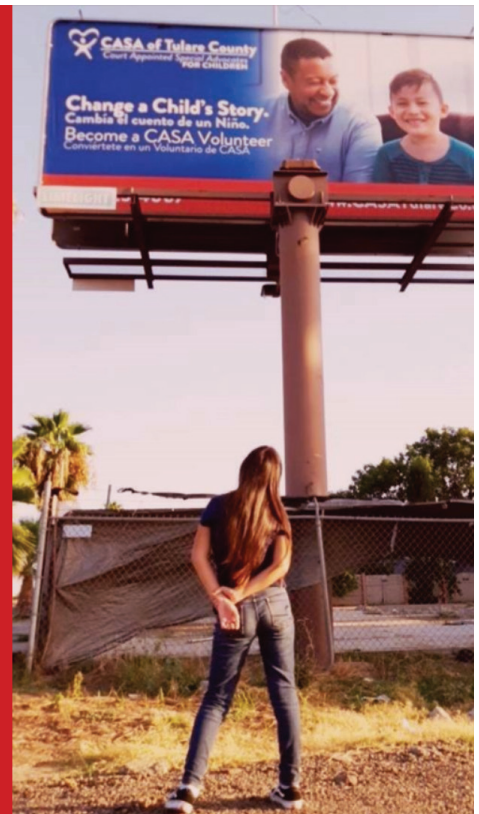
Stephanie is slowly beginning to understand the importance of having a support system, even when the possibility of being able to live with them is not an option. Family Connections will continue to work with the youth, Child Welfare Services, and the family to establish a plan that will help and support the youth during her time in Foster Care and thereafter.

We are thankful for our team's hardwork in securing Stephanie with a brighter future ahead filled with additional support!



When explaining that she wasn't going to be their CASA anymore, the kids didn't understand. She had to explain that it was a good thing because she felt they were in a good place and being well taken care of... but the oldest said, "it's just weird to hear you won't be our CASA anymore... even if we still see you or don't..."

**YOU ARE
ALWAYS
MY CASA"**



Financial

There are many things that keep CASA of Tulare County afloat. One of these is our financial donors. They give us access to tons of resources, allow us to effectively train volunteers and keep them up-to-date in training, and keep our offices running. Every single penny makes a difference, and we're truly grateful for all of you.

Recently, long time supporter and friend to CASA of Tulare County, Dick Dooley, passed away. We'd like to take a moment to say thank you to Dick and family for their continued love and support to the many children who've been blessed by CASA volunteers as a result of financial sponsors like Mr. Dooley.

MAJOR FUNDERS OF CASA OF TULARE COUNTY

First 5 Tulare County

Cal OES VOCA

Tulare County Health and Human Services

Judicial Council of California

Carpenter Family Children's Foundation

Anne B. Reimers Charitable Educational Foundation

Eagle Mountain Casino

In n Out Burger Foundation

Groppetti Automotive

Provident / Salierno Family Foundation

The Sence Foundation

V F Outdoor, LLC

Spencer Anderson, DDS

Bueno Beverage Company

Steve & Trish Chrisman

Correia Family Foundation

Mendes Calf Ranch

Jim & Tammy Valov

Visalia Sunset Rotary

**Not available to volunteer as an advocate?
Supporting CASA can come in many
forms. Consider donating financially to
help train those who can volunteer!**

Outreach

A message from our Outreach/Training Coordinators about 2019 Summer Recap:



Jessica Robinson (Visalia): I am very happy that this summer turned out to be very successful. I put together my very first training and we have 14 new Advocates Sworn in. I want to express my gratitude to our community for being amazing it's heartwarming to see how they have been supportive, we have a lot more people interested in becoming advocates, people volunteering their time on helping us spreading the word about CASA, businesses allowing us to leave flyers and offering us ways they can help these children.

Araceli Espinoza (Porterville): I am excited to continue to see the growth of CASA in the community. I appreciate all the entities that have supported CASA in one way or another; the businesses that allow us their platform to advertise for our organization, the community volunteers who believe in our mission and help us spread the word, the presenters who donate their time to provide our trainees with such important information and of course our advocates. I am most proud of the 8 individuals who will be getting sworn-in. It's not just 8 more advocated for CASA but 8 more children's who's lives may change.



UPCOMING EVENTS CASA WILL BE PRESENT FOR:

OCTOBER

OCTOBER 4th: Ivanhoe Fall Carnival
 OCTOBER 8th: 1st day of Fall Visalia CASA Training
 OCTOBER 10th: Parenting Network Presentation
 OCTOBER 10th: Porterville Business Expo
 OCTOBER 12th: Exeter Fall Festival
 OCTOBER 12th: Agri-Center Fall Carnival
 OCTOBER 16th: Terra Bella Health Fair
 OCTOBER 16th: Porterville Pretty in Pink
 OCTOBER 17th: Domestic Violence Vigil
 OCTOBER 19th: Lindsay Health Fair
 OCTOBER 24th: Traver Health Fair
 OCTOBER 26th: Special Lives Event
 OCTOBER 26th: Safety and Health Fair
 OCTOBER 27th: Galaxy Theater Trunk-or-Treat

NOVEMBER

NOVEMBER 9TH: Over the Edge Event

DECEMBER

DECEMBER 6TH: Volunteer Appreciation Day

For more details on events or to get involved contact us at info@casatulareco.org or visit our website calendar!

6-21 CASAs

Recently, Emily (name changed) had run away from home. Advocate Jennifer asked if she could send Emily a message directly, via Facebook, but for safety and anonymity purposes, it was decided the CASA should send the message on behalf of Jennifer.

Jennifer sent the message she'd wanted to send to Emily to CASA Staff and it said, *"Hey Emily, it's Jennifer from CASA. I am very worried about you. Can you please let me know if you're okay or need anything. You can call me on my cell... email me... or message me back through this account. Please come back. Let's talk to your social worker about your placement in Porterville. I love you Emily and just know that I am here for you. -- Jennifer"*

CASA staff sent the message to Emily's Facebook account and after running away on 09/04/19, Emily returned on 09/09/19, just 5 days later. Emily and her mother reached out to Jennifer via telephone and agreed to meet with Jennifer in Porterville. Jennifer proceeded to return Emily to care by first going to the Porterville Police Station and called the Child Abuse & Neglect hotline. An on call social worker picked up Emily and placed her in a resource home. We are happy to announce that Emily is safe and in proper care with Jennifer by her side!

Another case in which teamwork had a play, was with Joseph (name changed) who after being removed from his home the violin was left in his home, leaving the school with a missing instrument. The school then denied Joseph the opportunity to

continue in band until he had his instrument back or paid the cost of replacement.

After a thorough search through the home with social worker,



it was determined that the instrument was gone. The social worker reached out to CASA regarding this situation hoping to either have the instrument replaced or the fee paid to assist Joseph's desire to continue in band.

Our theme for the season is that it takes a community to raise a child. After reaching out to the Torres family from the Roxx Agency, who also work with kids and music, Euler Torres was able to find a replacement violin from a donor, Grace Rios, in the community. The violin was received from Grace in Porterville and was delivered to the resource parent. Joseph is now able to continue his musical education as a result of a community effort!

Newsletter organized by Marketing Coordinator, **Melissa Murphy** | October 2019 | **CASA of Tulare County**

YOU can change a child's story too. Support CASA of Tulare County in your own way. Contact us for more information and ways you can make a difference, right here, in your community, your county, your city.

Visalia Location:
 1146 N Chinoweth Street
 Visalia, CA 93291

www.CASATulareCo.org | info@CASATulareCo.org | 559-625-4007

Porterville Location:
 93 N Main Street, Ste C
 Porterville, CA 93257