

# Pizarro: Child Advocates of Silicon Valley turns 30

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Child Advocates of Silicon Valley is celebrating its 30th anniversary by turning the spotlight on the Court Appointed Special Advocates that it trains to work with foster kids throughout Santa Clara County.

Saturday night's Heroes and Legends fundraising gala at Club Auto Sport in San Jose will honor six people who have been essential to Child Advocates' success. That group leads off with Nora Manchester and retired Superior Court Judge Len Edwards, who founded Child Advocates in 1986 to provide a voice for foster children in the dependency system.

Since then, more than 15,000 kids have been helped through the support of more than 10,000 volunteers from the community.

The evening's other honorees have all been part of that support system, either by volunteering as Court Appointed Special Advocates or by providing recruiting or training support. They are Moe Whitaker, who was the first CASA volunteer and today -- at 90 -- still has monthly lunches with CASA volunteers; Ann Whyte, who worked as a CASA specialist for 17 years until her retirement in 2010; Vilma Palette, a former teacher and lifelong volunteer who served on the board and became its recruiting and training coordinator; and Kevin Gardner, a marketing consultant who first volunteered as a CASA in 1996.