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## **CHILD ADVOCATES OF SILICON VALLEY HIRES NEW PROGRAM DIRECTOR TO SUPPORT MORE CASA VOLUNTEERS**

**Milpitas, CA – January 26, 2016** – [Child Advocates of Silicon Valley](http://www.cadvocates.org) has hired Stacy Castle as Director of Programs to oversee the agency's Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program. Child Advocates recruits, trains and supports CASA volunteers to provide critical emotional and educational support to children in the Santa Clara County court dependency system.

Castle brings more than 20 years of nonprofit experience to Child Advocates, with a focus on strategic and organizational responsibilities, as well as volunteer recruitment and management. She has held jobs at Raising a Reader, the YWCA and Sunshine Preschool and served as a member of the Santa Clara County Child Abuse Council for nearly 10 years.

"The work of supporting children and advocating for their education is a value that I share, both personally and professionally. The fact that Child Advocates of Silicon Valley provides support to almost half of the foster children in our community is amazing and I am honored to be part of this work."

Karen Scussel, executive director of Child Advocates says that Castle will oversee a team of 11 that will support nearly 700 CASA volunteers this year. Additionally, Castle will work with the Community Outreach department to increase community awareness about Child Advocates and recruit more volunteers to become CASAs. "We're looking for everyday people who want to make a difference in a foster child's life. Teenage boys, in particular, need male role models," Scussel says.

Castle herself is taking the plunge and is wrapping up her 30 hours of training to become a CASA volunteer. She will be sworn in by Santa Clara County Superior Court Judge Shawna Schwarz on January 28, 2016.

"It's so important for children to have a stable adult presence in their lives," Castle explains. "By being a CASA, I can help provide that stability and give children who have experienced abuse and neglect support to create a better future for themselves."



Child Advocates has an ambitious five-year strategic plan to provide a CASA for every child in the Santa Clara County foster care system by year-end 2018. Currently, there are more than 1,600 children in the Santa Clara County dependency system, 1,000 of which could benefit from a CASA. This year, Child Advocates hopes to serve 780 children with a CASA volunteer.

Individuals interested in becoming a CASA volunteer can contact Amalia Renteria at 408.573.5611 or visit Child Advocates' website ([www.bemyadvocate.org](http://www.bemyadvocate.org)) to sign up to attend a Volunteer Open House/orientation session to learn more about the role and requirements of becoming a CASA in Santa Clara County.

### **About Child Advocates of Silicon Valley**

Child Advocates is the only agency in Santa Clara County that provides Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) to foster youth. Because our volunteers are court-appointed, they can thoroughly research every aspect of a child's case, including meeting teachers, doctors, social workers, counselors, biological family members and foster parents, thereby gaining a comprehensive perspective on what the child needs in order to thrive. CASAs assist their child in accessing needed resources, follow their school progress, and speak up for their child's best interests in court. They maintain complete records about the case, submit reports and attend court hearings. CASA volunteers stay with their case until their child has a safe, loving home. Find out more about our CASA program at [www.BeMyAdvocate.org](http://www.BeMyAdvocate.org).

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