

Child Advocates of Silicon Valley Executive Director

Child Advocates seeks passionate and fearless executive to lead a transformational shift in strategy that increases and diversifies funding in order to scale and provide advocates to all children in the Santa Clara County dependency system.

[Child Advocates of Silicon Valley](#) provides stability and hope to children who have experienced abuse and neglect by being a powerful voice in their lives.

Focusing on foster children who have been removed from the custody of their parents, Child Advocates matches children with a trained, dedicated and trustworthy volunteer. The Court Appointed Special Advocate ("CASA") is there for the child and to advocate for the child. The CASA serves as a consistent and reliable presence in the child's life while they are part of the dependency system... and often beyond. They are the one person in the child's life that can meet with teachers, doctors, social workers and foster parents, and provide insights and recommendations to the court so that judges can make better decisions that advance a child's welfare. The CASA spends quality time with the child, works to identify and then introduce them to beneficial services and programs, and ideally becomes a friend and trusted mentor.

The dependency system is complicated and has many different programs and partners that seek to ensure the child's welfare is first and foremost in the minds of all who serve, protect and support. Child Advocates is one piece of this system, and the organization is laser-focused on recruiting and training CASAs, and on matching them with foster children to provide the critical emotional and educational support. New CASAs receive over 30 hours of training and once matched with a child, it is unlike most other "volunteer" roles, due to the time, the immediacy and emotional commitment involved. The benefits to a child are immeasurable – this is where an adult can make a real difference.

Since its founding in 1986, Child Advocates has matched over 16,000 of the county's most vulnerable children with a CASA. The model has demonstrated that:

- 71% of Child Advocates' children ages three-to-five are enrolled in preschool, compared to 23% of all three-to-five year old children in the Santa Clara County Dependency System
- 95% of Child Advocate youth completed or are on track to complete their high school requirements, compared to 58% of foster children in California
- When a CASA is assigned to a foster child, more educational, therapeutic, and medical services are ordered for children and families.

In FY2018, Child Advocates supported more than 900 of the 1500 children in the Santa Clara County dependency system. Its new three-year strategic plan is to provide a CASA for every foster child living in the county by year-end 2021. To meet this goal, Child Advocates needs to increase and diversify its funding in order to recruit, train and support CASAs. This will require a 33% - 50% increase in funding and in the number of CASAs. The Executive Director, the Board and staff, with the help of the community, will drive toward achieving this goal.

Child Advocates has a regular, full-time staff of 26 compassionate professionals. It is governed by a 20-member board of directors. The operating budget for FY19 is \$2.5M. Of that, approximately 50% comes from events and individuals, 25% from government funding, and the remainder from foundations and corporations.

BASIC FUNCTION

The new Executive Director's primary purpose is to support Child Advocates' efforts to recruit, train, match and support/retain CASAs. This is accomplished by having extraordinary vision, leadership and management sensibilities, by empowering and supporting staff, and by being a strong presence within the community, with system partners and with financial supporters. The Executive Director will be a passionate and powerful voice in conveying the need for CASAs, the impact on children's lives, for systemic change addressing the needs of foster children, and the reasons why volunteers and funders should support the work.

Specific responsibilities and oversight duties include:

LEADERSHIP & VISION

- Thoroughly understand Child Advocates – its history and culture; governance structure, staff, Board, funding streams, programs, outreach, community network, political landscape and constituencies.
- Interpret, own and implement the strategic plan with an eye keenly focused on scale, organizational development and financial sustainability; ensure that goals and objectives are clear with regular check-ins to assess progress or impediments; through collaboration with staff, identify the impact to staff workload and organizational culture in order to prioritize and balance workflow with intended outcomes.
- Provide thought leadership and encourage openness and experimentation for creative approaches for tackling new CASA recruitment, training and support; identify and address areas challenging Child Advocates' evolution and growth; willingness to take calculated risks for the advancement of organizational goals.
- Stay abreast of developments and trends in the dependent children arena; consider and introduce ideas that advance Child Advocates' agenda
- Maintain a climate that attracts, retains, motivates and develops a multi-cultural, diverse, high-quality staff and Board; create an environment that embraces collaboration, innovation, accountability and diversity of opinion.

FUNDRAISING, EXTERNAL RELATIONS, CASA RECRUITING

- Create a fund development strategy to diversify contributed revenue so funding becomes more predictable and sustainable; review all current fundraising activities and segmentation by donor type to determine how resources are being allocated; refocus, if needed, to ensure energies are prioritized on activities with greatest ROI.
- As Fundraiser-in-Chief, personally drive the cultivation, solicitation and stewardship of new and existing major donors and grants; ensure appropriate staffing is in place to support fund development strategy; provide coaching and support to Board members to assist in their fundraising activities.
- Expand the public's understanding of Child Advocates' brand and work so that its mission, values, outcomes and stories are consistently and effectively conveyed through the website, social media, and printed collateral; ensure that materials designed to attract multi-cultural CASAs are appropriately placed and are bi-lingual; transform awareness into contributed revenue and new CASA volunteers.

- Conduct public speaking and community outreach with the goal of building support for Child Advocates; serve as an empathic advocate and knowledgeable spokesperson on issues related foster children;
- As a solutions-oriented and creative thinker, assume an active working role with various local collaboratives that move system-change activities forward; develop and cultivate mutually beneficial relationships with other nonprofit organizations, state and local government and community leaders to deepen the services and partnerships necessary to fully support the needs of foster children.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT, FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND ADMINISTRATION

- Ensure that day-to-day operations and programs are professionally and efficiently organized and administered; ensure proper administration of contracts, including compliance with relevant employment laws and other legal requirements; maintain and strengthen the organization's infrastructure including IT systems, financial controls and related business processes to sustain and improve service.
- Review current organization structure to assess that senior management has the appropriate training and resources to effectively lead their teams and advance operational and strategic goals; provide continued assessment of staff to ensure advancement, productivity and performance.
- Review all internal communications, systems, controls, processes and procedures; ensure that Child Advocates' maintains a solid operational foundation; provide leadership toward ideation and implementation of continuous improvements in agency's processes and technology that ensures effective delivery of donor/volunteer centric services.
- Maintain the organization's fiscal health, make sure it adheres to a sustainable financial plan based on a Board-approved annual budget and that financial performance positively tracks budget and operating plans; foster an atmosphere of transparency and accountability in matters relating to the organization's financial condition.
- Establish metrics and dashboards ensuring programs meet objectives and that data is captured and analyzed for program evaluation purposes.

BOARD RELATIONS

- Become familiar with Child Advocates' governance policies; develop, recommend and implement policies, fundraising and program goals and objectives; provide ongoing communication to the Board on critical matters related to Child Advocates.
- With the Board Chair and Executive Committee, coordinate the efforts of regular and ad hoc committees; develop meeting agendas, schedules, retreats and other activities with the Executive Committee; ensure that all committees achieve objectives; encourage Board members' appropriate involvement in Child Advocates' range of activities.
- Assist the Board in identifying and recruiting new Board members whose talents, backgrounds, commitment and interests are congruent with the needs and mission of Child Advocates.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The Executive Director will be a visionary but pragmatic leader possessing the following key qualifications and characteristics:

- A commitment to the mission of Child Advocates; an understanding of the needs and challenges of foster children, either as a nonprofit leader in a related field, a current or former CASA, public official or nonprofit board member, with eight+ years of management experience.
- A track record in attracting financial support, whether as a nonprofit executive or board member, or from the commercial sector, from individuals, foundations or businesses; a strong partnership/relationship builder; having contacts in the Silicon Valley would be an advantage.
- Demonstrated experience in change management and scaling an organization; ability to build and align essential resources for administrative infrastructure, technology, talent acquisition and retention, and awareness building/CASA recruitment; track record of implementing strategies that improve internal workflows, communications, goal setting and metrics for measuring progress.
- Decisive and resourceful, with the organizational sensitivity to gain the support and confidence of the Board and staff at all levels; a team builder and collaborator, confident and competent, with strong skills in management and leadership; one who trusts and empowers the senior management team; understands the subtleties of recruiting, motivating, directing and retaining a diverse group of personalities with different work styles.
- Fearless and experimental; one who can see and convey the long term benefits of taking calculated risks.
- One who is creative and can identify and convey the synergies and mutual benefits that come from collaboration; a contributor who works well with diverse stakeholders, partners and collaborators; politically savvy.
- A grounded visionary and lifelong-learner who can see the real-world needs of foster children and complicated systems based on data and trends, and shape programs that are effective, highly leveraged and sustainable.
- An individual with outstanding human qualities; one who is straightforward, shares information easily, listens as well as offers advice, and respects the abilities of others; someone who imparts trust and integrity, and guides others in a similar vein.
- Outstanding oral and written communication skills.
- An individual possessing a sense of humor, and an ability to maintain balance and perspective.

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