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CHILD ADVOCATES OF SILICON VALLEY LAUNCHES 100 CASAs for 100 Children CAMPAIGN

100 Volunteers Needed to Serve Foster Children for the New School Year



Milpitas, CA – July 5, 2016 – [Child Advocates of Silicon Valley](http://ChildAdvocatesofSiliconValley.org) has launched an ambitious two-month campaign to recruit 100 new volunteers to serve 100 more children in foster care for the new school year.

Child Advocates is the only agency in Santa Clara County that provides Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) to foster youth. Last fiscal year, the non-profit served nearly 800 foster children with a CASA volunteer. CASAs work one-on-one with children in foster care, providing critical emotional and educational support, ensuring that each child's needs are met and their voice is heard while they are in the court dependency system.

“Right now, we have about 120 school age children on our wait list in need of a CASA,” says Karen Scussel, executive director of Child Advocates of Silicon Valley.

“Our goal is to recruit, train and support 100 new CASAs to help these children as they start the new school year.”

Individuals interested in becoming a CASA volunteer can visit Child Advocates' [website](http://www.cadvocates.org) to sign up to attend a [Volunteer Open House/Orientation Session](http://www.cadvocates.org/volunteer) to learn more about the role and requirements of becoming a CASA volunteer in Santa Clara County. No legal experience is necessary to become a volunteer — just a willingness to reach out to a child when he/she is feeling most vulnerable. The time commitment is 10-12 hours per month, and volunteers must be 21 years or older to become a Court Appointed Special Advocate.

The CASA Difference

While there are many different mentoring programs available to volunteers, the CASA program is unique. Because CASAs 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.

Scussel says CASAs make a tremendous difference in a foster child's life, noting that more foster children receive the educational, therapeutic and medical services they need when they are matched with a CASA volunteer.

Only 58% of all foster youth in California complete high school but with the support of a CASA, foster teens fare much better. More than 85% of Child Advocates' teens completed their high school requirements and planned to continue their education at a community college or vocational program.

More Men Needed

Scussel says nearly half the children in foster care are male but less than 20% of CASA volunteers are men.

"We want to change that. Young boys, in particular, need positive male role models," Scussel explains.

Child Advocates is entering the fourth year of a 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.

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. CASAs assist their child in accessing needed resources, follow their school progress, and speak up for their child's best interests in dependency 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.

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