

April 2017 Donor Report

In great part due to our philanthropic partners and CASA volunteers, we are pleased to report that in the last year, we have nearly doubled the number of new CASA volunteers, expanded programming to include post-secondary advocacy support, and have begun implementation of our six-year strategic plan in order to triple the number of youth served by FY2022. Through funding from Focusing Philanthropy, CASA has been able to expand our recruitment and training teams in order to recruit more volunteers, and more quickly train and process them as CASAs. We have also been able to significantly enhance our data measurement efforts, allowing us to track and report on case outcomes for the first time in CASA's history.

As you know, for 37 years, CASA of Los Angeles has been the only organization in Los Angeles providing court-appointed advocates to youth in foster care, helping these children navigate not only the trials of the courtroom, but also the trials of a challenged childhood. Being a CASA is unlike any other volunteer opportunity. CASAs become a critical part of the youth's life—they get to know their families and caregivers, they work with their teachers and counselors, they connect them to services and advocate for what they need in the courtroom, and they become a stable, steadfast adult who cares about the child over the long term without ever being paid to do so.

For many years, CASA/LA served 500-600 children annually, but with the support of our generous philanthropic partners and CASA volunteers, we have served 792 children since July, and are poised to serve 1,000 children and youth by the end of this year, nearly doubling the number of children with CASA advocates since 2010. In addition, CASA also provides "day of court" assistance, where trained volunteers orient children to court procedures and accompany children to their court appearances. This program impacted the lives of over 4,000 children last year.

CASA has also greatly increased its volunteer cadre – swearing in more new CASAs (61 volunteers) last month than ever before! So far this year, CASA has had a total volunteer pool of 608 CASAs, of which 228 have been newly recruited and trained. We have already registered 95 new recruits for pre-service training in April and May, and anticipate recruiting over 300 volunteers this year. Over the last year, CASA has increased the number of people attending information sessions each month (from 153 in January 2016 to 153 in January 2017), the number of information sessions being offered (from 11 info sessions in January 2016 to 16 in January 2017), and the number of viable applicants per month (from 58 in January 2016 to our highest number ever in January 2017 at 67 applicants!). In addition, CASA has continued to recruit from populations which best reflect the children we serve, including the Spanish-speaking, Latino, and African-American communities, as well as men and volunteers from a wider array of professions and age groups.

Over the last year, CASA of Los Angeles has recognized two crucial needs to order to increase the number of CASA volunteers recruited and to better serve the children and youth in the CASA program.

CASA Community Collaborations Project: As part of our six-year strategic plan, CASA intends to launch co-locations over the next three years with community partners in the following regions: San Fernando Valley, South Los Angeles, and South Bay/Long Beach. In order to engage these diverse geographies, these collaborative work and meeting spaces will consist of office and training spaces to offer community members a space in which to attend information sessions, volunteer interviews, pre-service,

and in-service trainings, and to meet with their Senior Program Coordinators, CASA staff with trained experience in child welfare who provide their expertise and support on CASA cases. These offices will not only provide more convenient recruitment and training locations, they will grant CASA/LA significant outreach and marketing platforms in each community.

Post-Secondary Advocacy Program: CASA of Los Angeles is making a high-level commitment to launch an aggressive expansion of the educational support we provide to foster youth through the Post-Secondary Educational Advocacy Program. CASA will collaborate with agencies currently providing post-secondary services to Transition Age Youth in addition to collaborating with local universities, colleges, and vocational training schools to develop formal partnerships around post-secondary opportunities at their respective schools. CASA will develop core training around these partnerships, providing post-secondary education preparedness and transition training to CASA advocates who work with the 476 transition age foster youth that CASA currently serves, 364 of which are 15 and above.

This year, we also completed the full implementation and training for our new monitoring database Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) Social Solutions. Over the course of the year, we were able to develop a framework which now allows us to accurately track key data elements, i.e. how many children we serve, how many CASAs are serving said youth, the number of children on our waitlist, and how many more CASA volunteers are needed to serve that waitlist. In addition, ETO also provides a way to track case progress, and will be the beginning of outcomes measurement at CASA. When a case is assigned, both the Senior Program Coordinator and the CASA volunteer will examine the case and will rate the status and level of risk of the child on a baseline scale along the three core dimensions of safety, permanency and wellbeing. We will be documenting in the database the initial assessment related to these dimensions; the advocacy goals and plans (steps and procedures to be implemented); the degree to which the plan is then implemented; and how the assessment of safety, permanency, and wellbeing measures changes over time.

Of those cases which closed last year (144 assessed cases), at the time of assessment, 73% of the youth were considered moderate to high risk in terms of permanency, or lack of a permanent home situation, 27% were rated high-risk in safety, requiring immediate action, 30% were rated high-risk in physical wellbeing, 62% of the youth were considered moderate to high risk in the area of mental health, and 64% of the youth were considered moderate to high risk in terms of educational and learning development. At the time of closure, the same cases were reassessed along the outcomes scale, resulting in the following improvements in all areas: only 26% of the youth were still high risk in terms of permanency, 14% were rated high risk for safety, only 9% were now rated high risk for physical well-being, 24% of the youth were still considered high risk for mental health, and 32% of the youth were still considered high risk with issues of educational and learning development. In addition, of the cases closed in FY2016, 56% resulted in a permanent placement for the child or youth.

In the past six years, CASA/LA has also vastly expanded its philanthropic revenue, increasing annual donations from \$544,000 to \$3.8 million. CASA has been fortunate to receive funding from many foundations, including: The Eisner Foundation (\$125,000), The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation (\$100,000), Carl & Roberta Deutsch Foundation (\$100,000), and Focusing Philanthropy (\$100,000). Additionally, CASA has increased its individual contributions from \$198,536 in FY2010 to \$961,000 in FY2017, and is poised to once again raise over \$1 million at our upcoming annual gala, An Evening to Foster Youth, on May 16, 2016 at the Beverly Hilton. This year's event will be honoring Emmy-award winning actress and CASA volunteer Mary Beth Evans, Freeform's "The Fosters," Los Angeles philanthropic group SHARE, Inc., and former CASA/LA Executive Director Dilys Tosteson Garcia.