

THE CHANGE A LIFE MATCHING CHALLENGE 2015
In Support of CASA Los Angeles & Voices For Children
Donor Report – August 2016

I. CAMPAIGN BACKGROUND - Foster Care In California

An estimated 400,000 kids flow through our nation’s child welfare systems each year, and California is home to the most foster children of any state. ***Within California the overwhelming majority of these children are in the hands of dependency courts in a handful of Southern California counties, among them: Los Angeles, Riverside, and San Diego Counties.*** Though foster care programs are administered at the county level, the pattern of negative foster youth experience is distressingly consistent across the state and the country; youth who are or have been in the foster care system have low levels of education, poor employment prospects, poor health, and high crime rates.

In recognition of the critical state of foster care in our state, Focusing Philanthropy launched the “*Change a Life Matching Campaign*” to raise \$250,000 in support of the incredible work of two CASA programs that transform the lives of foster youth in the very counties where they are concentrated: Los Angeles, San Diego, and Riverside Counties. The two CASA programs serving these three counties are CASA of Los Angeles and Voices For Children, the latter operating in San Diego and Riverside Counties. In addition to serving foster youth in the counties where they are concentrated, these programs had each demonstrated several years of sustained growth; for the past few years each has consistently grown to serve more youth than in previous fiscal years.

In support of the overall campaign goal, Focusing Philanthropy would assemble a \$100,000 challenge grant for CASA of LA and Voices for Children to leverage at least 1:1, and if possible 1:2. The total challenge grant of \$100,000 would be split evenly amongst these two CASA programs.

We are delighted to report that this collaborative appeal was even more effective in raising new donations than expected. **In total the “*Change a Life Matching Campaign*” generated \$254,000 in gifts for these two CASA programs! The campaign ran from September 2015 – December 31, 2015.** This 6 month final report (from campaign conclusion) summarizes the impacts of this campaign on Voices For Children and CASA of Los Angeles. Both CASA of Los Angeles and Voices For Children are on July 1st fiscal year start, as such all funds raised during this campaign have been deployed towards their 2016 fiscal year operations (July 1, 2015 – June 30th, 2016).

II. THE CASA MODEL

Nationwide, nearly 1,000 community-based CASA programs recruit, train, and deploy citizen volunteers to become court appointed advocates for what can be the most challenging subset of foster care youth. All CASA volunteers assigned to a foster youth undergo at least, and in many cases more than, 30 hours of “pre-service” training and 12 hours of continuing education annually. Once trained, these volunteers are responsible for only one or two cases at a time and frequently until the case is closed and the child is placed in a permanent home.

CASA volunteers are the sole, consistent adult advocates ensuring that a child’s needs are being met while in the system, and simultaneously working towards helping them achieve permanency in a loving home. They develop a deep understanding of the child’s circumstances and needs; making recommendations to the family court

judge; visiting with the foster child frequently; reviewing his/her case to determine service needs; verifying that those services are being provided; meeting with his/her social worker, teacher, foster care provider and parents (when a reunification is in process).

The CASA intervention model has been the subject of an impressive array of studies of varying methodological rigor that have found many lasting impacts, including:

- CASA volunteers are highly effective in getting their recommendations accepted in court. In 80% of cases, all or almost all CASA volunteer recommendations are accepted.
- Foster children with a CASA volunteer were adopted 22% of the time versus 14% for children not assigned a CASA volunteer.



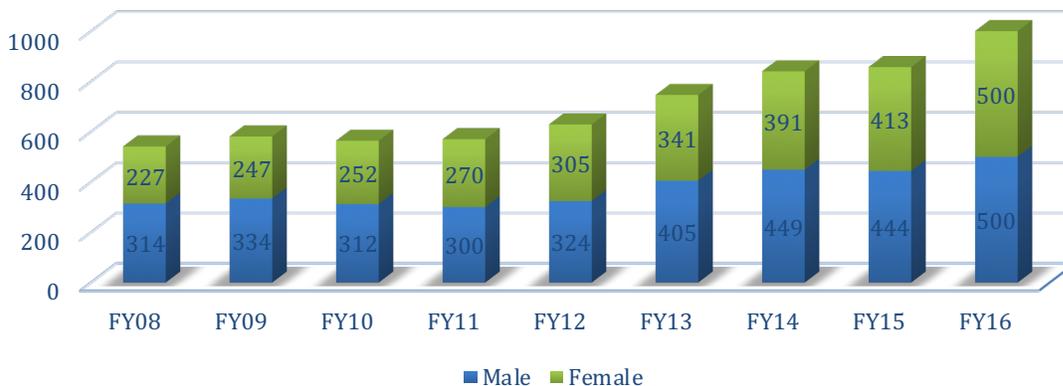
III. CASA of Los Angeles

Every day in Los Angeles County, nearly 30 children are removed from their homes and placed in the foster care system—a system that, despite the best efforts of many, lacks the resources and stability necessary to adequately provide for the 30,000 abused and neglected children under its care, more than any other county in the country. For those who remain in the foster care system until they turn 18, only 1 percent will graduate from college, 40 percent will be homeless within the following 18 months, and 25 percent will be incarcerated by age 20.

For over thirty years, CASA of Los Angeles has been the only organization in Los Angeles providing court-appointed advocates to youth in foster care, and in the last five years, since becoming a privately funded non-profit, CASA/LA has nearly doubled the number of children served. However, in order to increase the number of youth served, CASA of Los Angeles must recruit and train more volunteers each year than ever before. In 2016 fiscal year CASA of Los Angeles intends to serve 1,000 youth with intensive advocacy, more than ever before. In order to achieve these goals, it must recruit 200 new volunteers this fiscal year.

CASA of Los Angeles would deploy the \$50,000 challenge grant 1:1, in order to raise a combined \$100,000 to support growth in their volunteer recruitment, training, and management activities. Funds raised through this campaign would enable CASA of Los Angeles to fund the costs associated with recruiting and training 80 of the 200 new volunteers needed to reach 1,000 foster youth with intensive advocacy.

Youth Served by CASA/LA



The Status of Volunteer Recruitment

We are delighted to report that CASA of Los Angeles has been able to make significant progress towards their volunteer recruitment goals this fiscal year, surpassing stated goals in their proposal to Focusing Philanthropy.

All grant funds from this collaborative campaign (a total of \$100,000) have been expended to cover the salary and benefits of staff providing volunteer outreach, training, and support of CASA volunteers.

As of the writing of this report, CASA of Los Angeles is on track to recruit and train at least 200 new volunteers by FY2016 end (June 30, 2016). The number of **active volunteers**, who are currently serving an active case, has increased year over year, from 490 in FY2015 to 509 towards the end of FY2016, with 41 more volunteers to be added by fiscal year's end. On average, 10% of CASAs will resign each year (approximately 50 CASAs) and another 10% will go on leave or become inactive for a period (another 50 CASAs), therefore, CASA must not only recruit enough volunteers to replace these inactive volunteers, but to increase our cadre in order to serve more children. This growth over the past fiscal year has been possible through enhancements in our recruitment and training efforts that include:

- The addition of ***four full-time staff*** members focused on outreach to geographic specific communities throughout Los Angeles County, including but not limited to: San Gabriel Valley/Glendale/ South Los Angeles/West Los Angeles, Long Beach/South Bay, and San Fernando/Santa Clarita/Antelope Valley. On average our current CASAs spend fifteen to twenty hours each month offering volunteer advocacy services for their youth. This includes driving from all points of Los Angeles County to the Juvenile Courthouses located in Monterey Park and Lancaster, and to the homes and schools of the children they serve. Therefore, CASA has chosen the five supervisorial districts as the desired geographic locations in order to reach the greatest number of volunteer recruits. CASA has one location in the First District (Monterey Park) in which only 11% of our volunteers reside, and one location in the Fifth District (Lancaster) where 25% of our volunteers reside. However, the Lancaster location is at the northern most part of a very large district. Currently, 14% of our volunteers are in the Second District (which includes South Los Angeles, a region in which many CASA youth are placed and/or originate), 32% of our volunteers are in the Third District (which includes San Fernando Valley and extends to Malibu, 50 miles out from the closest CASA office), and 18% of our volunteers live in the Fourth District (extending out to Rancho Palos Verdes, 40 miles from the closest office). Through more geographic-focused recruitment, CASA will be better able to recruit from diverse communities across Los Angeles County.
- ***Increasing training staff*** to include three full time trainers and increased training opportunities. This has allowed CASA LA to more quickly process volunteer applications, conduct prospect interviews, and provide pre-service training, a 36-hour intensive curriculum, which all CASAs must complete prior to being sworn in by the Court, in addition to ongoing trainings with information from experts in the field of child welfare. It takes a community to help a child not just survive but also to thrive. CASA/LA regularly partners with many like-minded organizations and governmental agencies to serve more children in the foster care system, including: Los Angeles Dependency Court, Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services, Children's Law Center, The Alliance for Children's Rights, Child Development Institute, and the Los Angeles Department of Mental Health. In addition, CASA/LA frequently collaborates with the following organizations: The Right Way Foundation, Zero to Three, Project ABC, L.A. Child Guidance Center, Vista Del Mar Child and Family Services, and Secure Transitions Foster Family Agency, among others.

Understanding the Volunteer Recruitment Process

Because CASAs are sworn-in officers of the court, the recruitment and training process is a fairly rigorous endeavor. From the first recruitment inquiry to the initial case assignment, CASA prospects must attend and complete the following activities:



- Attend one of our regularly held information sessions and hear from CASA staff and an experienced CASA volunteer about his/her experience. Since the beginning of the fiscal year, *there were 883 information session attendees.*
- Complete and submit an application and local security clearance form. Complete a Live Scan and clear Department of Justice (DOJ), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), National Sex Offender Registry, Child Abuse Central Index (CACI), and local security checks. Since the beginning of the grant period, *CASA received 358 viable applications, which were able to clear all security checks.*
- Participate in at least one interview at the CASA office in either Monterey Park or Lancaster. Depending upon the outcome of the interview, prospects will be invited to pre-service training.
- Attend and successfully complete CASA/LA’s 40-hour pre-service training program. Since the beginning of our fiscal year, *158 CASA volunteers have completed training.*
- Be matched with a child! *128 new CASAs have been assigned to a case this fiscal year.*

2016 Youth Served

Since December 1, 2015, 459 volunteers have provided intensive advocacy to 627 children in LA County. Overall, this fiscal year, 509 volunteers have provided 776 children with the same intensive advocacy. In addition to advocacy, another type of volunteer service is “day of court” assistance, where trained volunteers orient children to court procedures and accompany children to their court appearances and hearings. Called “Shelter Care,” this program impacted the lives of 5,495 children last year, exceeding the goal of 5,000 children.

CASA continues to enhance the training and volunteer specialization components of our program, which supports the three principal goals of advocacy: ensuring the safety and security of the children during their time in foster care; speedier permanency through placement with parents, other family members, or through adoption; and enhanced well-being for children and youth of all ages. In addition, CASA has continued to recruit increasingly from populations which best reflect the children we serve. These include, the Spanish-speaking, Latino, and African-American communities, as well as more men and volunteers from a wider array of professions and age groups.

Demographics of Children Served by CASA/LA in FY2016

AGE

- 19% - Birth to 5
- 24% - 6 to 11
- 44% -12 to 17
- 13% - 18 and above

ETHNICITY

- 39% African-American
- 34% Hispanic/Latino
- 10% White/Non-Latino
- 3% Multi-racial
- 1% Native American

Beyond fiscal year 2016

In fiscal year 2016, CASA/LA developed and formally embraced their next six-year strategic plan, through which the primary goal is to serve 3,000 children by FY2022 (10% of the 30,000 currently in care of the dependency court system) – volunteer recruitment will continue to play a central role as CASA LA continues to scale their work. Recognizing that our projected growth is dependent on the number of volunteers we recruit each year, we have built a recruitment strategy, which will allow us to scale our growth in order to recruit, train and maintain 1,750 active volunteers by FY2022. Goals are viewed through the following annual numbers of active volunteers:

Fiscal Year	Number of Volunteers	Increase in Volunteers	Percentage Increase	Number of Children (% Increase)
2016 (Revised)	550	60	12%	950 (9.6%)
2017	650	100	18%	1105 (16%)
2018	742	92	14.2%	1260 (14%)
2019	928	186	25.1%	1568 (24.4%)
2020	1178	250	26.9%	1995 (27.2%)
2021	1430	252	21.4%	2442 (22.4%)
2022	1750	280	22.4%	3000 (22.9%)



IV. VOICES FOR CHILDREN

In San Diego, there are more than 5,000 children who spend time in the foster care system over the course of one year. Voices for Children believes that each one of these children deserves a safe and permanent home, and to that end, will review and monitor every court file in the system, provide a CASA to every child in the foster care system who needs one, and advocate to improve the lives of foster children. The agency's vision is to *Serve Every Child* by providing CASA volunteers to all San Diego County foster children who need one. ***This fiscal year, Voices for Children will be closer than ever to realizing this vision by serving more than 3,000 boys and girls in foster care with 1,800 CASAs – effectively serving 60% of the need. Voices For Children also boasts the largest cadre of CASA volunteers in the Western United States.*** In addition, Voices for Children recently launched a new program to provide CASA services to Riverside County foster children as well.

Voices For Children deployed their \$50,000 challenge grant through this campaign 1:2, effectively leveraging the \$50,000 grant to mobilize an additional \$104,000 from other donors. Through this campaign Voices For Children raised \$154,000 to help fuel their growth to reach a record 3,050 foster youth this past fiscal year!

The Organization's Growth

As the only local agency designated by the courts to provide CASAs to foster children, Voices for Children and its staff and volunteers have touched the lives of over 130,000 San Diego County foster children over the past 36 years. From humble beginnings as a grassroots, all-volunteer effort to the professional-caliber nonprofit organization VFC is today, the organization is now the largest CASA program in California and the Western states, and in the Top 3 of all CASA programs in the United States.

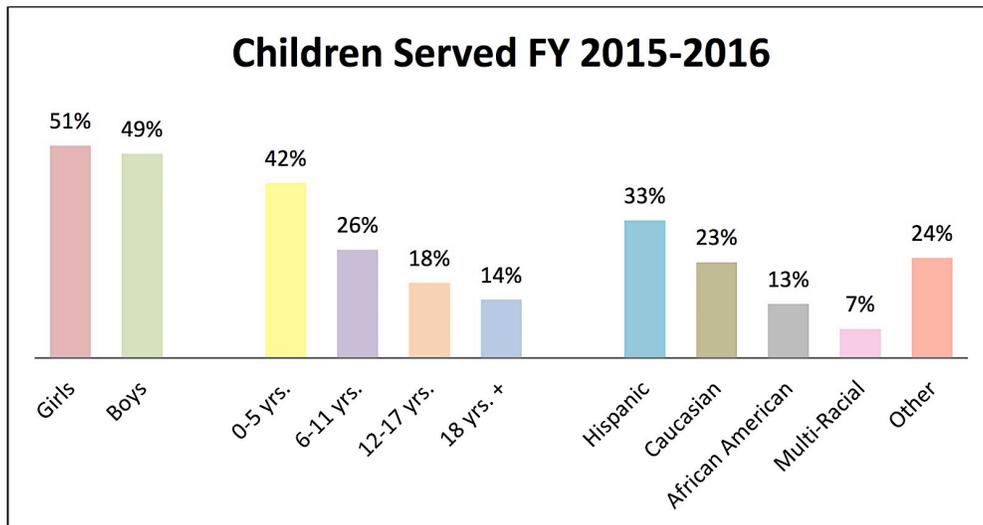


When attorney Sharon M. Lawrence joined VFC as Executive Director in 1997, VFC entered a new phase of dynamic growth. In the 19 years since, the budget has grown from \$400,000 to \$5.5 million, and programs and services have grown commensurately. The past five years have seen the most dramatic growth. In FY2009-2010, VFC served 1,100 foster children with 707 CASAs on a budget of \$2.7 million and a staff of 27. This past fiscal year (FY2015-2016), with a budget of \$5.5 million and a staff of 73, VFC supervised a CASA volunteer corps of over 1,400, and provided 3,050 children with advocacy services.

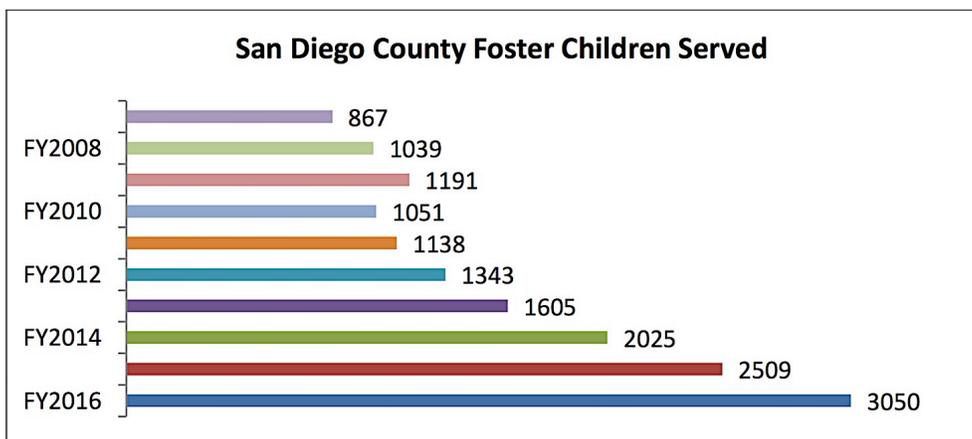
2016 Youth Served

In one way or another, VFC serves all of the approximately 5,100 children who spend time in San Diego County's foster care system over the course of a year. Our foster children served with CASAs come from all over San Diego County. The tables included below detail demographic data of youth served by CASAs based on FY2015-2016 results.

Sadly, children from birth to age five comprise the fastest-growing age group in foster care. Babies who do not have love and support during their formative years are at-risk for serious issues, including less-refined motor skills, delayed speech, or even mental health problems later in life. Voices for Children created the Infants and Toddlers Program (ITP) to help the youngest children in foster care. Every CASA is trained with the ITP curriculum, and in FY2015-2016, 391 CASAs served 827 infants and toddlers. Of these children, 213 cases closed, resulting in 107 reunifications, 81 adoptions, and 10 guardianships.



The Board of Directors, staff, and volunteers of Voices for Children share a vision to impact and transform the foster care paradigm by one day providing a CASA volunteer to every single child in crisis. Thanks to our thousands of volunteers and financial supporters including Focusing Philanthropy, we are closer than ever to realizing our long-term Serve Every Child vision.



Early Case-Assignment of CASAs

Voices For Children (VFC) piloted and this year expanded their new Case Liaison Program, which is changing substantially the way they serve thousands of foster children each year by offering early intervention. Case Liaisons are stationed at each of San Diego's six dependency departments, triaging cases in real time and allowing Voices For Children to assign trained CASAs within an average of 14

days from their dependency hearing (typically the date the judge declares a child a dependent of the Court and part of the foster care system). The organization then collects and inputs detailed information about the foster children into their database, which is designed to report on a myriad of data points. VFC then immediately begins to find the right CASA for each child who needs one, so that he or she may advocate early on the case to find permanency for the foster child through adoption, guardianship, or reunification with birth families after appropriate services.

By being present in court for every single detention hearing, Case Liaisons are the key to providing early assignment to every child who needs a CASA. Voices for Children can now communicate directly with attorneys in real time, which helps to bridge communication gaps and build stronger, collaborative working relationships with the Juvenile Court, Dependency Legal Group, County Counsel, and the Health and Human Services Agency. Because VFC's Case Liaisons have access to a wealth of information in the court, they not only can more quickly and accurately identify which children are in immediate need of CASAs, but they can also define key issues within each child's case prior to CASA assignment. Our early evaluation studies have shown that the children who receive early CASA intervention exhibit a higher level of well being, spend less time in the foster care system, and, especially with the younger ones, have dramatically fewer returns to foster care.

Beyond fiscal year 2016

Given the growth of Voices For Children to serve such a major portion of the need in San Diego County, and now in Riverside County, as the organization looks ahead their priorities turn to financial sustainability. In order to provide services for children in both San Diego and Riverside Counties, Voices For Children must secure over \$6 million annually. This would be challenging enough in and of itself, but it is made more complicated by the fact that VFC received only 2% of its operating funds from government sources in FY2015-16. The organization does not have an Endowment Fund or other corpus of resources upon which it can count year-upon-year. Thus, a high priority as they look ahead to FY2016-2017 and beyond is encapsulated in one word: sustainability.

Because the CASA model is such a labor-intensive one, the organization is also challenged budgetarily since they cannot shrink or grow quickly without having devastating impact on loyal and hardworking staff and on the foster children whose advocacy depends on CASAs having the support of a professional team. So that is another reason sustainability is so critical. While the organization's plans are well founded and strategic, they face challenges to raise 94% of \$6.1 million (2016-2017 budget) over the next twelve months.

