



## FOSTERING GROWTH CAMPAIGN

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### **THE PROJECT:**

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Focusing Philanthropy and Voices for Children launched the Fostering Growth Campaign to provide individualized advocacy services for more than 150 foster youth in Riverside County. Voices for Children is one of nearly 1,000 county-based Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) programs throughout the country serving foster youth. CASA programs recruit, train, support, and supervise community volunteers to serve as individual advocates for foster children until permanency is achieved, or the case has been closed. They are often the only consistent, caring adult in a foster child's life. CASAs are assigned to a single child or sibling group, providing a level of individual attention and support that is unparalleled elsewhere in the foster care system.

### **FOCUSING PHILANTHROPY 2019 CAMPAIGN IMPACT:**

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Voices for Children and Focusing Philanthropy set out to raise \$300,000 through the Fostering Growth Campaign, in which \$200,000 of donations secured by Voices for Children would be matched with a \$100,000 grant from Focusing Philanthropy. The campaign ran from January 4, 2019 – December 31, 2019. In the end, 28 total donors in Riverside responded, with gifts ranging from \$500 to \$50,000; totaling \$187,012. Seventeen (17) of these donors had previously given to Voices for Children, but they were persuaded to increase their giving to support the campaign. Additionally, this campaign generated 10 new donors to Voices for Children's Riverside County program.

As a direct result of the \$280,518 we raised during this campaign, 141 children benefitted from the life changing advocacy of a CASA volunteer. Focusing Philanthropy played an instrumental role in our ability to assign CASAs to 412 abused and neglected youth during Voices for Children's FY2019. The campaign has also poised the Riverside County CASA program for success in our FY2020. Voices for Children is incredibly grateful for the support of Focusing Philanthropy and your organization's belief in and long-standing commitment to our mission.

### **IMPORTANCE OF THE CASA PROGRAM:**

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The impact CASAs have on the lives of the foster youth they serve is immeasurable. With the intervention and support of a CASA volunteer like Rhonda, foster youth like Michael\* are able to achieve incredible milestones:

CASA Rhonda began advocating for 19-year-old Michael in November 2019. Michael spent the majority of his teenage years in the foster care system with no consistent caregiver or other adult presence. Foster youth like Michael have the option of remaining in the foster care system until they turn 21, so long as they meet minimum requirements to continue receiving services. When CASA Rhonda was assigned to Michael, his case was about to be terminated because he was not following the guidelines to remain in foster care. He had not been to see a doctor or optometrist (even though his vision was very poor), was not taking his medication, did not have a job, and

was not enrolled in school. Rhonda stepped in and discovered that Michael wanted to accomplish those things, but had no idea how to get started. With Rhonda’s help, he made doctor and optometrist appointments, which led to a new prescription for medication and a new pair of glasses. With his improved vision and newfound confidence, he began interviewing for jobs, opened a bank account, and moved into transitional housing. He is also learning how to use the bus schedule so he can utilize public transportation. During one of their outings to a restaurant, Michael took a napkin and wrote out Rhonda’s name in fancy script, decorated the napkin, and gave it to her as a gift. Rhonda learned of Michael’s creativity and desire to pursue the arts, and is currently helping him explore ways to use his talents, including enrolling him in formal art classes.

Focusing Philanthropy’s campaign made it possible for VFC to provide immediate service to youth like Michael. We are committed to maintaining high-quality programming and continuing to build capacity so we can ensure that each of the children we serve receive individualized, consistent advocacy that improves their quality of life.

\*Name has been changed for confidentiality.

Voices for Children is so grateful for the support of Focusing Philanthropy and your investment in our CASA program. Together, we have changed the lives of 141 of the most vulnerable youth in Riverside County. Thank you.