



BRIGHTER FUTURES FOSTER CARE CAMPAIGN 2022 REPORT

THE PROJECT

Focusing Philanthropy and Voices for Children launched the Brighter Futures Foster Care Campaign 2022 to meet the critical needs of children living in foster care in San Diego County. VFC committed to recruit, train, and supervise 240 CASAs for a year who, in turn, would support and advocate for at least that many children or sibling groups living in foster care during an extreme and unpredictable time. When considering the sibling sets supported by many of our CASA volunteers, we estimated that approximately 315 children in foster care would be supported through the 2022 campaign. Voices for Children is excited to report that these goals were exceeded this year and many more children received the advocacy they needed to thrive.

FOCUSING PHILANTHROPY 2022 CAMPAIGN FINANCIAL IMPACT

Focusing Philanthropy played an instrumental role in our ability to assign CASAs to 504 abused and neglected youth during Fiscal Year 2021-2022. Voices for Children and Focusing Philanthropy partnered with a goal to raise \$750,000 through the Brighter Futures Foster Care Campaign. Thanks to the generosity of Focusing Philanthropy, the Campaign raised a total of \$840,000 in which \$560,000 of donations secured by Voices for Children were matched with a \$280,000 grant from Focusing Philanthropy. This year's campaign ran from February 1, 2022 - June 30, 2022. Three of VFC's objectives for the campaign were to re-engage lapsed donors, convince existing donors to increase their donation, and of course to secure new donors. When the campaign was completed on June 30th, VFC's San Diego office reported that 27 generous donors had contributed \$560,492. Of these donors, 6 were re-engaged donors who had been lapsed for two years or more; 4 were donors who increased their gift amount; 7 were new, and the remainder were loyal, repeat donors. Additionally, these 27 donors learned about the amazing support that Focusing Philanthropy provides to Voices for Children and many other nonprofit organizations. Voices for Children is incredibly grateful for the support of Focusing Philanthropy and your organization's belief in our mission.

FOCUSING PHILANTHROPY 2022 CAMPAIGN PROGRAM IMPACT

As a direct result of the gifts raised during this campaign, Voices for Children successfully supported 336 CASA volunteers and provided individualized CASA advocacy to 504 new and existing children in foster care in San Diego County. During fiscal year (FY) 2021-22, Voices for Children (VFC) provided 1,421 San Diego County youth in foster care, including 459 of the 983 children who entered foster care during the year, with the consistent and comprehensive advocacy of a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA). In addition, VFC staff members provided advocacy to 483 children with shorter-term needs, bringing the total number of children served this year to 1,904. During the year, VFC staff members assessed every child entering foster care. VFC continued to monitor those children not provided with advocacy in case their needs rose to a level requiring either a CASA or staff advocate. During the year, 226 new CASAs graduated from Advocate University and were matched with individual children in foster care during the year.

Among our accomplishments during the year, we are particularly pleased to have earned the Innovative Inclusion Tier of Recognition, the highest recognition granted, from All Children—All Families, a project of the Human Rights Campaign Foundation. The All Children—All Families project promotes LGBTQ-inclusive policies and affirming practices among child welfare agencies and formally recognizes those agencies that are leading the field with innovative approaches to inclusion. This accomplishment is especially important to us because LGBTQ youth are overrepresented in the foster care system, often due specifically to their sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.

One challenge that we experienced was a decline in the number of new CASA volunteers recruited during the first half of our fiscal year. Community members shared that they wanted to make up for lost time with family and friends before giving back on a broader scale. To mitigate this decline, VFC increased our recruitment efforts. Our recruitment team has formed new connections with local community organizations and businesses, including the North County LGBTQ Resource Center, the Black American Political Association of California, Indian Voices, U.S. Bank, and the North County NAACP in order to expand our reach.

More important than the numbers and challenges are the lives of children changed for the better as a result of the advocacy provided by their CASA volunteer. The following two stories demonstrate the impact that a CASA can have in the life of a child.

Tianna

Tianna entered foster care when she was 6 years old. CASA Laura has advocated for Tianna over the past four years, since Tianna was 11. While in foster care, Tianna has lived in 11 different placements, most of which lasted only a few months. For the past five years, Tianna had lived in a foster family agency (FFA) foster home. It was the longest, most stable home she had known since entering foster care. She enjoyed strong relationships with her social worker and her therapist and was thriving at her school, a charter school with small teacher-to-student ratios. Tianna's foster parents decided to adopt her but abruptly changed their minds before the adoption closed. This devastated Tianna and disrupted her stability and her life.

In addition to losing her home and her relationship with her foster parents, Tianna faced losing access to her FFA social worker, her therapist, and her school community. CASA Laura worked tirelessly to identify a new home for Tianna within the same FFA network so Tianna could keep the same social worker and therapist. Laura also worked with the San Diego County Office of Education's Foster Youth Liaison to arrange transportation for Tianna so she could continue to attend the same school.

Although changing foster home placements was heartbreaking for Tianna, CASA Laura and Tianna's social worker worked together to ensure that she retained as much stability within her broader support system as possible.

Damon

Seven-year-old Damon entered the foster care system after suffering physical and emotional abuse and neglect from his parents. Within weeks, he was matched with CASA Brad. Like many victims of abuse and neglect, Damon was initially shy and withdrawn around Brad and his new foster caregivers. Brad spoke with Damon on the phone weekly, and during an outing to LEGOLAND, Damon began to open up to Brad about his interest in karate. He confided in Brad that he would love to take karate classes. During Advocate University, Brad had learned that developing hobbies and learning new skills can help children who have experienced trauma to regain a sense of agency. Brad called Damon's caregiver to see

if they would consider enrolling Damon in karate lessons. He learned that the caregivers were willing to transport Damon to karate classes, but they were uncertain about where they could find an affordable program. Brad researched karate programs in Damon's neighborhood, contacted each studio to learn more about their pricing, and followed up with the caregivers to share this information. Three weeks later, Damon attended his first karate lesson. Damon told Brad that he really likes his karate instructor and that he has made some friends in class as well. The caregivers told Brad that Damon has been excited to tell them about each karate class and that he smiles more often at home. Because of Brad's advocacy, Damon is creating new friendships, developing new skills, and experiencing success for the first time. We are excited to see how Brad's presence in Damon's life continues to evolve.

CONCLUSION

Our work at Voices for Children cannot be achieved without the support of organizations like Focusing Philanthropy. Focusing Philanthropy played an instrumental role in our ability to assign CASAs to 504 abused and neglected children. We are incredibly grateful for your support and your belief in our mission. Together, we have changed the lives the most vulnerable children in San Diego County. Thank you.