

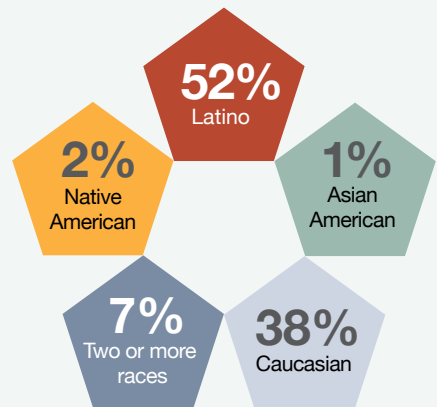


*Our vision is that all children
are nurtured in the hearts
and homes of safe and
loving families.*

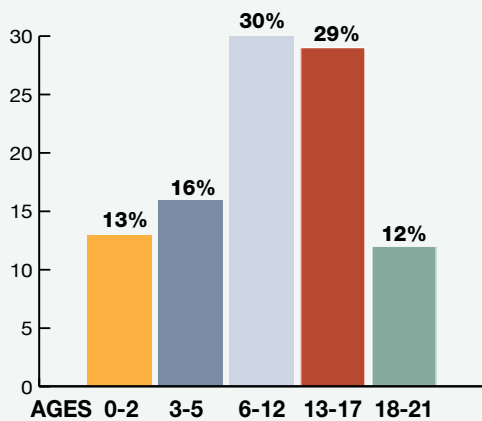
OUTCOMES



of CASA youth age 18-21 are employed or in school



Ethnicity of Children Served



Ages of Children Served



Percentage of CASA high school seniors who completed their high school requirements (compared to 50% of all foster youth nationwide)



Volunteer Information

Volunteer hours **16,000**
Inkind Value..... **\$479,200**

FINANCIALS

Financial Summary | FY 2018-2019

Statement of Activities

REVENUE EARNED

Individual and Business	\$933,583
Grants	\$430,911
Events	\$255,452

Total revenue received this year **\$1,159,946**
Grants awarded specifically for use in future years \$450,000

Gross Revenue **\$1,619,946**

EXPENSES \$1,176,295
Use of grants awarded in previous years for this year \$16,349

Your Support Makes a Difference

We count on the continued support of our generous donors, foundations, and corporations to be the backbone of our successful organization.

85 cents

of every dollar donated goes to services that directly support the advocacy of children in foster care in Santa Cruz County.

YOU MAKE THE DIFFERENCE for CASA Children

Dear Friend,

It gives us great pleasure to share this report with you. Thanks to your generosity, once again we had our most successful year ever last year. You gave your time, financial contributions, and support. We could not be more grateful for all the ways you stand behind our youth.

Given all of your investments in CASA, you should know about our plans for the future. Thanks to you all, last year 2/3 of the children and youth in Dependency Care had a Court Appointed Special Advocate! This is quite an achievement, but we know that **every child** in the Dependency Court system will benefit from having an Advocate. So, we have made an ambitious detailed plan which will allow us to provide 91% of the youth who are dependents of the Court with an Advocate by 2025.

We also spent the last year launching a pilot program to start providing Advocates for Juvenile Justice involved youth. The research tells us that the youth who are on probation have experienced many of the same life challenges and traumas as the youth in Dependency we already support. CASA of Santa Cruz is one of four counties selected to participate in this pilot project in CA. California CASA is working with a nationally recognized team of expert researchers from the University of Michigan to assist in the design, implementation, and evaluation of this project. While it is clear that CASA programs are effective from countless personal success stories, this is the first time that CASA's exceptional advocacy work with youth will be studied and will have the opportunity to generate data proving the effectiveness of the CASA model. **Our sitting Judge of the Juvenile Court system, Judge Guy, shared more about this pilot project and you can find excerpts from our conversation with her later in this report.**

We are very much looking forward to sharing another great year with you.

With respect and gratitude,



Nancy Gordon
President, Board of Directors



Lynne Petrovic
Executive Director

CASA Mission and Vision

MISSION:

CASA of Santa Cruz County advocates for children, providing Court appointed volunteers so each child in the Dependency Court system feels cared for and connected with the people, families, and resources they need to heal and flourish into adulthood.

VISION:

Our vision is that all children are nurtured in the hearts and homes of safe and loving families.

MIRANDA GANCI

Advocates make a difference for our children's future



“I wish I would have done it sooner!”

Miranda has always wanted to make a difference for kids. She has a huge heart for children in foster care and is even considering becoming a foster parent someday. She got involved with CASA soon after she moved to Santa Cruz five years ago from North Carolina. She works locally at Driscoll's as a plant pathologist.

When Miranda was assigned as Mary's Advocate, it was the first time she had worked with a little one. Mary was three years old when they met, so this was very different from her previous case with a teen. Miranda sees herself as a member of an important team, helping to advocate for and facilitate things that will benefit Mary. She has done an amazing job of being in communication with everyone on Mary's team, including social workers, therapists, biological parents, and foster parents. For example, she was aware of the close bond Mary and her father have, and through collaboration with the social worker and foster parents, she facilitated a small birthday party for Mary which her father planned, and she was able to bring Mary to the party. Whether he is able to reunify with Mary is yet to be determined by the Court, but Miranda knew the relationship was important to Mary and that having her birthday with her dad would mean a lot to her.

Miranda is one of the most nonjudgmental people you will ever meet, and this ability to meet people where they are has been the reason she has been so successful. She has been able to earn the trust of the significant people in her CASA child's life. She says that after training ended and she was assigned a case, she was surprised by how much she was working with the family and acting as a liaison between the birth family and the foster family, as well as all of the community partners she interacted with. “I felt like I became part of this big extended family. This process has opened my eyes and I've learned so much. I wish I would have done it sooner.”

The Child and Family Team

In Santa Cruz County, Advocates have long valued working with all members of the child's support network in order to address the child's unique needs. In 2016, the state of California recognized the team approach as best practice and passed a law requiring all children in care to have an official Child and Family Team (CFT) that meets whenever decisions are being made on the case. In 2017, CASA of Santa Cruz went to Sacramento to argue that all Advocates in the state of California should be

included as part of the CFT meetings. The state agreed and passed SB925 in 2018 requiring inclusion of the Advocate.

Children who have an Advocate have:*

- Greater number of interested adults in their lives
- More neighborhood resources
- Better ability to work with others
- Increased ability to resolve conflicts

*National CASA website

“It meant everything to me”

—Raquel



Raquel met Ann, her Advocate, when she was nine years old at a particularly difficult time. Her mother had just gone into a drug rehab program and her father had been deported. It was a time of turmoil for this young girl and she didn't have reason to trust another new person in her life. So what did Ann do to build trust? She listened. She didn't ask questions about Raquel's case. She let her speak about what she wanted to and allowed her to share on her own terms. Raquel says, "It meant everything to me because it showed me that she was there for my well-being without an agenda." CASA volunteers are, of course, trained to do this, but hearing from Raquel the impact it had for her is powerful.

When Raquel spoke on stage at CASA's Imagine event in September, she was proud to share how the connection with Ann has driven her to become the successful young woman that she is today. They have stayed in touch all these years, and Raquel is now in her second year of college while working two jobs. She also glowed about her family, as she has witnessed her mom go through recovery, move out of temporary housing, regain custody of her children, and become a homeowner. Her siblings are working towards their educational goals as well, and as a reunited family, they are thriving. Having an Advocate with them through their process of transformation has meant having someone in their corner, believing in them, believing that families can grow and recover and become even stronger.

Advocates Working with Families

We know that children, like Raquel, generally do better when they are able to live with their birth families or extended family. Recently, the state passed the Continuum of Care Reform (AB403) which recognized this and consequently there are more children living with birth families. Currently, approximately 70% of the youth in the Santa Cruz dependency care system live at home with a parent or extended family member. For years, CASA volunteers have successfully supported youth through reunification and worked closely with their birth families. We have seen the impact of having an Advocate with these families through this process.

Studies show that children who have an Advocate are*...

- Half as likely to re-enter foster care
- Spend less time in foster care
- More likely to find a safe permanent home
- More likely to succeed in school

*National CASA/GAL website, <https://casaforchildren.org/our-impact/>

MARY & RUDY BERGTHOLD

Supporters change the lives of children with their gifts of time and resources



“CASA works!”

—Rudy

Mary and Rudy have been supporting CASA with their incredibly generous gifts of time and financial contributions for many years because, as Mary puts it, “CASA works!” Rudy says he supports CASA “because nothing is more important to me than the safety of children.” We are so grateful to have them as part of our CASA community.

As an Advocate, Mary was able to affect change in so many young people’s lives. She was drawn to CASA because her own childhood wasn’t easy – she was witness to the impacts of alcoholism and mental illness firsthand. She was personally influenced by positive adults in her life and was able to overcome these early challenges and become the successful healthy adult she is today. It is because of this personal experience that she believes strongly that young people in the system can succeed. She always felt that her role as an Advocate was to help a young person believe in themselves. “The end result of the individualized attention they get is that they feel valued, capable, and able to make good decisions.”

Mary and Rudy have been event sponsors and volunteered to help organize CASA events. Mary has also been a community advocate for CASA, doing speaking engagements to share her experience and her philosophy on empowering young people to reach their highest potential. She believes that by simply spending time and encouraging a young person, one caring adult can really impact the future for that child.

Mary’s Philosophy is Supported by Data

According to research conducted by National CASA, children with a CASA volunteer:



Value achievement more



Have more positive attitudes towards the future



Model more healthy social interactions



Are less likely to engage in criminal activity

JUVENILE JUSTICE PILOT PROJECT & JUDGE DENINE GUY

CASA of Santa Cruz has been selected by California CASA as one of four counties to participate in a Juvenile Justice Pilot Project that will bring the services of CASA to youth in the Juvenile Justice System. This decision follows a national movement to provide CASA services for this population over the past years.

We spoke with Honorable Denine Guy, who serves as the Presiding Juvenile Court Judge, to get her thoughts on the project.

You were on the bench for Dependency Court for 6 years and filled in after that as well, so you have many years of experience working with CASA volunteers. Can you share a little about that?

I've been working with CASA since 2008. It has helped having the Advocates sharing the impact and challenges of the children with the Court, as they uniquely know these children and see things that I and social workers may miss. I also have learned from them about advocating for educational resources and the importance for permanency and how to put a child's needs over those of adults around them.

As you know, CASA of Santa Cruz has been selected to participate in the Juvenile Justice Pilot Project. How do you feel about our Advocates serving these youth?

Thrilled and excited as it is a big honor to be part of this pilot. The Advocates know that working with a teen takes patience, flexibility, consistency, and wisdom. Our youth need positive role models and sources of hope for their futures.

What types of cases do you see in the Juvenile Justice Court? And are there cases you've seen where you thought a CASA volunteer would have made a difference?

Every day. I get to know these young people and the trauma they have experienced. For example, for one youth whose father died two years ago, his way of handling his grief was by getting involved in criminal activity. An Advocate could work with this youth to find alternatives to criminal behavior and gang activity. For youth whose home lives are chaotic, by just being a consistent supportive presence in their lives, CASA could make a difference by changing the isolation many of them feel, helping them with their education, exposing them to positive activities, and helping them have some fun. Many of them don't have any fun and don't know even what that means.

What strengths do you feel we have in Santa Cruz County that support us taking on the challenge of working with this new population?

Our Probation Department will be a strong partner. They, along with the Court and the collaborative attorneys, start from an intention to build partnerships with youth and families. The focus is not on punishment, but rather on safety, rehabilitation, and connection. The partnership with CASA, the Court, and Probation is already well-established, so we are eager to work together to serve these youth.

What is your hope for the youth getting a CASA volunteer Advocate in their lives?

My hope is that they see themselves differently - Through the eyes of their Advocate. One caring adult can make a difference and can really change a life.



THESE GIFTS HAVE changed children's lives

CASA of Santa Cruz County is grateful to the following individuals, businesses, foundations, and government agencies whose contributions from July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019 made our work possible.

\$575,000

Meadow Fund at the Silicon Valley Community Foundation

\$50,000 - \$100,000

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Casa for CASA Ten Year Anniversary Creating Our Home in Watsonville



This year we celebrated the ten year anniversary of the Casa for CASA Capital Campaign. Ten years ago, a dedicated group of staff, Board and community members launched the capital campaign to raise funds to purchase the beautiful CASA home in Watsonville. The CASA house is open weekdays for Advocates and children to cook, play, create art, and just hang out together.

Come for a Tour!

You are invited to come for a tour of the house. Call us today to schedule your own personal tour. Fun facts – we just renovated the front garden and installed solar panels!

**Court Appointed Special
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