CHAMPIONING EVERY CHILD



CASA of Santa Cruz County Impact Report Fiscal Year 2023/24 July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024



OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

CHAMPIONING EVERY CHILD

⁶⁶ Every child deserves a chance to dream big and have a caring relationship that makes all the difference!⁹⁹

- Simone Biles, Olympic Gold Medalist

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OUR VISION

All children are nurtured in the hearts and homes of safe and loving families.

OUR MISSION

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

OUR PLEDGE

We pledge to take action to reduce our individual, our agency, and community implicit biases that contribute to systemic inequities. We, the staff and the board of directors, will collectively commit to advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion policies and practices internally, in collaboration with community partners, and in our work with families and youth.

Dear Friends,

This annual report highlights the profound impact your contributions have made over the past year. With your help, we continue our mission to offer a volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocate to every child, baby, and youth who is under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court. Whether it's helping them find their voice, or facilitating access to vital services, or just being there as a friend, our Advocates are there, championing every child.

This year we are particularly proud of our Juvenile Justice Program, matching Court Appointed Special Advocates with youth who are juvenile justice involved. This program has continued to grow and strengthen which would not be possible without the generous support from our community—volunteer Advocates, individual donors, local businesses, our Judges, and community partners who believe in our mission.

We know the CASA model works. Youth under the jurisdiction of the court who are matched with CASA volunteers have better educational outcomes, receive more services, are mentally and physically healthier as adults, and reach a permanent home faster. Looking ahead, we remain committed to our vision of a community where every child is safe, supported, and heard.

Thank you once again for being a vital part of our CASA family. Together, we will continue to ensure that every child in Santa Cruz County has a champion.

In community,





Josué Barajas Board President



Lynne Petrovic Executive Director

HIGHLIGHTS

CHAMPIONING A YOUTH IN JUVENILE JUSTICE



Many people wonder how to champion a youth who has faced challenges within the juvenile justice system. Erin, a dedicated CASA Advocate, did just that.

13-year-old Jamie^{*} was being bullied in school for being different. This unfortunately led to a physical altercation and police involvement. As terms of their probation, Jamie was ordered to do community service hours, classes aimed at promoting positive behavior, and write a letter of apology. To help them through these difficult times, Jamie was offered a CASA Advocate, Erin.

Erin immediately realized that reading about a youth on probation and the charges brought against them is not a true reflection of the person. This became clear when they sat down to dinner together for the first time. Erin saw a youth that needed and deserved a champion.

Over burgers, they bonded over their mutual love of cats and soon discovered they had even gone to the same middle school. The connection was instant, and Jamie, who had been guarded at first, gradually began to open up about their passion for drawing, cartoons, and graphic novels, sharing a glimpse of their vibrant inner world.

Erin helped Jamie and their mother access critical resources, addressing their concerns about Jamie's grades and ensuring they had the necessary support for academic success. When Jamie's court hearing came, Erin was right there, sitting next to Jamie's mother, providing reassurance and a steady presence throughout the process.

Today, Jamie is doing exceptionally well. Their grades have improved, they've made new friends, and they are starting to embrace the fresh start they've been given.

Ultimately, Erin showed up when Jamie needed another understanding adult, proving that every young person has dreams, talents, and the potential to thrive and deserves a champion. Together, they navigated the complexities of the juvenile justice system, turning what could have been a setback into a stepping-stone toward a brighter future.

*Fictious name

THE POWER OF CHAMPIONING EVERY CHILD

BENEFITS FOR YOUTH IN OUR COMMUNITY

For a child or youth navigating the foster care and/or juvenile probation system, the role of a consistent, caring CASA volunteer is incredibly impactful. Extensive research shows youth paired with a CASA are far more likely to thrive in key areas than peers without an advocate.

With a CASA, foster children are more likely to be placed in a safe, permanent home, and remain connected to loved ones. Youth experiencing probation are more likely to successfully complete the terms of their probation and re-connect with community in a timely manner with a CASA's help. CASAs make sure both foster and justice-involved youth receive the vital health services they need and deserve in order to heal and thrive. They support youth to stay on track educationally, graduate high school, and explore career paths. Studies find youth with a CASA report greater hope, self –efficacy, and resilience. They are less likely to re-enter the child welfare or juvenile probation system.

In short, volunteer advocates lift up youth who feel unseen and unheard and connect them to the resources they need to thrive. They champion children's needs in courtrooms, classrooms, health care, and communities. CASAs empower youth to envision a brighter tomorrow and believe in themselves to achieve their dreams.



Achieve a permanent home



Receive vital services in a timely manner



Be on track to graduate from high school



Less likely to reoffend



Report higher levels of hope



Have long-term connections to loved ones



CASA OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY



Matching advocates to a child or youth needing support can provide a transformative experience, shaping their future. Advocates offer guidance, mentorship, and emotional support, helping them navigate challenges. With a caring adult, these children and youth develope resilience, self-esteem, and essential life skills.

Our Impact Over the Past Year



Foster Children and Youth Served



Justice-Involved Children and Youth Served



Dual-Status Children and Youth Served



Active CASA of Santa Cruz Advocates



Total Hours Contributed by CASA Advocates



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES (ACCRUAL BASIS)

FOR THE FISCAL YEARS ENDED JUNE, 2024 AND JUNE, 2023

REVENUE AND SUPPORT	2023-24	2022-23
Individual Donations*	\$370,890	\$945,509
Private Grants*	\$789,089	\$805,573
Government Grants*	\$396,755	\$377,589
Fundraising Events	\$193,425	\$248,345
Miscellaneous	\$2,950	\$397,486 [†]
Total Revenue and Support	\$1,762,109	\$2,774,502

EXPENSES

Program Services	\$1,664,129	\$1,377,784
General & Administrative	\$176,135	\$149,398
Fundraising	\$207,827	\$132,799
Total Expenses	\$2,048,091	\$1,659,981

*Multiple-year grants and donations are recorded in full, the year they are received [†]One-time, post Covid-19 Employee Retention Credit

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*Roles on 6/30/2024

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*Roles on 6/30/2024

CASA of Santa Cruz County Impact Report 2023/24

VOLUNTEERS

WITH THANKS

Les Forster

CASA of Santa Cruz County is so grateful for the volunteers who champion every child in our community. Our work would not be possible without them. They come from all over the county, representing a wide range of backgrounds, ethnicities, and experiences, but all have an amazing capacity to care. They are truly community heroes, consistently showing up and being committed to the best outcome for a child's future.

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CASA of Santa Cruz County is thankful for all our donors and appreciates every one of them for giving what they can to our organization. These individuals, businesses, foundations, and government agencies make our work possible and enable us to expand to serve more youth in the community. The following donors provided a monetary or in-kind gift of \$100 or more in our 2023-2024 Financial Year. We are full of gratitude.

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Thanks to the support of our donors, CASA is able to advocate for children in foster care and the juvenile court system, ensuring they have the resources they need to succeed. You can champion a child in our community with a gift today.

MAKE A TAX-DEDUCTIBLE

DONATION, a check in the mail, an online credit card donation, stock transfer, a gift through your employer's matching gift program, or even a vehicle.



ESTABLISH A MONTHLY DONATION, and join CASA's Guardian Circle of recurring monthly donors for as little as \$10 a month.

JOIN THE LEGACY SOCIETY. There are many ways to ensure future generations of children and youth have an Advocate at their side.

BECOME A VOLUNTEER! Join the Friends of CASA, or sign up for an information session about becoming an Advocate at: www.CASAofSantaCruz. org.

SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT CASA to your colleagues, friends, and family.

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We are so grateful to our monthly donors whose stable funding helps CASA increase its impact while decreasing administrative costs. Their support makes a tremendous difference in our ability to make sure every child has a champion.

- Charles Adams Cecilia Avila-Gallo Larry Banducci Josué Barajas Meg and Steve Bontadelli Janet Bruno Anne and Tom Carr
- Susan Coale Margy Cottle Stefania Dal Zio Elaine Duxbury Mark Eastman Carol Fuller Greg Gaon Ron Goodman

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ORGANIZATIONS MATCHING EMPLOYEE DONATIONS

Employee match donations amplify individual charitable contributions, providing our organization with increased financial support, but perhaps more importantly, encouraging a culture of philanthropy within the workplace.

Apple	Driscoll's Charitable	Google	Johnson & Johnson	PG&E
AT&T	Giving Facebook	Intel Foundation	Macy's	Target

SCHOLARSHIPS

Through the generosity of a select group of donors, we're able to provide scholarships that help students pursue their education with fewer financial obstacles. Their support directly impacts young lives, giving youth the invaluable gift of learning and opportunity.

Bill McCabe Memorial	Omega Nu of Santa Cruz	Paul Hopper Memorial	Zachary Parrish Memorial
Scholarship		Scholarship	Scholarship

DONATIONS MADE IN HONOR AND MEMORY OF

Donating in honor or memory of a loved one serves as a meaningful tribute, celebrating their life or legacy while making a positive impact on a cause they cared about.

All the CASAs Fairfax Armstrong Kathleen and Edward Banks Linda and Robert Bates William Brigham Tony Carranza Richard Cooper John David Magi Diego Roberta Dunton Judy Everett Ginger, Pat, and Peggy Isabill Gruhn Meg and Don Harlor Amy Harrington Ron and Evelyn Hirsch

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EVENTS

IMAGINE! 2023

Our supporters once again celebrated our community's youth on September 9, 2023 at Sesnon House during our Imagine! event. Festivities included performances by Senderos and Activities for All Youth Mariachi, music, raffle, silent and live auctions, and a full-course meal. We were all moved once again by our amazing panel of speakers. All the proceeds raised go to support our programs serving the youth of our community.





FOR THE LOVE OF CHILDREN



At the annual luncheon hosted by the Friends of CASA on February 7, 2024, the community came together to learn more about CASA of Santa Cruz County and raise money for the CASA Children's Fund. We heard from a former resource parent, a CASA Advocate, as well as a former foster youth on how the Children's Fund and CASA helped the families of our community. The Children's Fund purchases essential and special items for the families we serve.



MOVE FOR CASA

We are so grateful for everyone who showed up, despite the rain, at our 4th Annual Move for CASA on May 4, 2024. Everyone had such a great time at this free, all-ages event, enjoying the beautiful Elkhorn Slough and getting some exercise! And we exceeded our fundraising goal, raising over \$20,000. Thank you!







VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION PICNIC

Our amazing volunteers, who donate so much of their time and energy, were honored on June 22, 2024, at our annual Volunteer Appreciation Picnic. Advocates, Board of Directors, Friends of CASA, Kappa Alpha Theta Sorority, and interns are vital to our organization, and we thank them all for their service, building CASA into what it is today.

We appreciate all they do, making a difference for the children and youth of our county who need and deserve our support and building a stronger connected community for all of us.





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CASA



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