

1989



2009

Foster Family Service Newsletter

Who Is CASA? (Court Appointed Special Advocate)

We all work with them on a regular basis and find them of great value to our court system. Do you know who these volunteers are and what they do?

CASA's inception dates back to 1977, when a Seattle judge concerned over making decisions about abused and neglected children's lives without sufficient information conceived a way to ensure their placement in a safe and loving environment. His idea to train community volunteers to speak for the best interest of children in court was so successful that, soon, judges across the country began utilizing citizen advocates.

CASA's Court Appointed Volunteers are trained to act as first-hand experts on the individual needs of abused and neglected children in foster care, giving them the best possible chance at a hopeful future. The volunteers core responsibilities:

- ◆ Serve as a fact-finder for the judge by thoroughly researching the background of the assigned case
- ◆ Speak on behalf of the child in the courtroom, representing his or her best interests
- ◆ Act as a "watchdog" for the child for the duration of the case, ensuring it is brought to a swift and appropriate conclusion

CASA volunteers undergo a thorough training and development program that consists of at least 30 hours of pre-service training, followed by 12 hours of yearly in-service training. Volunteers learn about courtroom procedure from the principals in the system – judges, lawyers, social workers, court personnel and others. CASA volunteers also learn effective advocacy techniques for children, and are educated about specific topics ranging from seminars on child sexual abuse to discussions on early childhood development and adolescent behavior.

After completion of the initial training, volunteers are sworn in as Officers of the Court. This gives them the legal authority to conduct research on the child's situation and submit reports to the court.

Thanks CASA Volunteers!

February 2009

Wendy Knutson, Editor

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FFS, Serving Our Community's Youth Since 1989

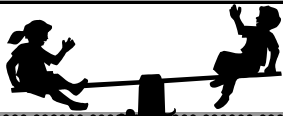
Coping With An Alleged Licensing Violation

by John Johnson, M.S.W., Psy.D.

I believe that one of the most difficult aspects of foster parenting is coping with an alleged licensing violation. Examples are endless, but the protocol to be followed is always the same: FFS staff are legally forbidden from speaking to our foster parents prior to CPS and/or CCL making face-to-face contact with the family. The reasoning is easy to explain, but clearly much harder to tolerate when in the middle of such a situation.

The child welfare system is charged to keep children safe when in foster care; children are easily swayed to tell an investigator what they think they are supposed to say. The prudent method of investigation is to speak to children separate from their caregiver(s). Further, not advising a caregiver of an allegation prior to interviewing them is intended to assure the most honest response. In practice, however, we frequently see our parents become extremely upset when CPS or CCL knocks on their door to discuss an allegation. We recognize how difficult this must be!

Please know that the weekly, consistent, direct communication that we strive to maintain with each certified family is designed not only to support healthy placements, but also to assure that both the family and agency people involved can safely trust that everything placement-related is above board. In so doing, when CPS or CCL knocks on the door of a certified home your FFS social worker should also be present to provide emotional support to you during the difficult discussion that follows. Please remember that CPS and CCL want what our certified families want: to ensure that children in out-of-home placement are kept safe and appropriately nurtured.



Did You Know?

Did you know that for just \$5 our FFS Foster Parents can buy MOVIE PASSES?

The passes are good only at Regal, Edwards and United Artist Theaters. This is not a fundraiser. Foster Family Service has chose to purchase these tickets in bulk for \$6 a piece and pass the special passes on for just \$5 to our Foster Family Service Foster Families and Staff!

Just call your local office to make sure they have tickets in stock.

(when a movie says 'no passes' for the first 14 days these passes will work with a \$1.50 surcharge— Still a GREAT Deal!)

How To Say "I Love You"

There are many ways to say I love you in each language. We found a few general translations

Language	Translation
Dutch	Ik hou van jou
Tahitian	Ua Here Vau Ia Oe
Swahili	Nakupenda
Maori (New Zealand)	kia hoahai
French	Je t'aime
Afrikaans	Ek het jou lief
German	Ich liebe Dich
Italian	ti amo
Italian	ti voglio bene (friendly)
Hawaiian	Aloha wau i'a oe
Sioux (Lakota)	Techihhila
Spanish	Te Amo
Spanish	Te quiero
Portuguese	Eu te amo
Chinese	wo ài ni

We Are Proud To Say... We Have Great Kids & Great Parents Too!

Great news from the *Resendes Home*, we hear that **Codye M.** recently received the "Principal's Award". This award is higher than Honor Roll! **Good Work Codye!**

Maurico R. in the *Cox Home* has made the Junior Varsity basketball team at Sierra High School and is keeping up his GPA at 2.5

Troy, Rebecca and Michael from the *Bryan Home* showed their Silkies (chickens) at the Poultry Exhibit at San Joaquin County Fairgrounds in January!

Dustin L. in the *Marks home*, is working hard at school, and home. Dustin is a very impressive young man. **Good To Know You, Dustin!**

Welcome to the *Nelson family* and their **four children** who attended one of the KING's games and "had a blast!" The kids got to be on the BIG SCREEN and had such an exciting evening. *Thanks to Mary Jo for getting us the tickets. They were Awesome seats.*



Remember You Are Making A Difference

*An older man walking on the beach at dawn saw a young man from afar.
The young man would bend down occasionally and pick up a starfish and fling it back into the sea.
Finally the older Man asked, "Why are you doing this?"
The younger man answered, "The stranded starfish would die if left until morning sun!"
"But the beach goes on for miles and there are millions of starfish" said the older Man. "How can your effort make any difference?"
The younger Man looked at the starfish in his hand and threw it to safety in the waves!*

It makes a difference to this one!"



The Welcome Mat Is Out For...

The Sannar Family Home
The Pond Family Home
The Herrera Family Home
The Nottnagel Family Home
The Ball Family Home
The Nelson Family Home

Welcome!

We are always interested in certifying new homes. If you know of anyone who may be interested have them call their local office. *FFS Certified Homes making a successful referral are eligible for a referral bonus.*

Foster Family Service Office Numbers:

Sacramento (916) 487-2111
Cameron Park (530) 676-6226
Lake Tahoe (530) 544-2111
Stockton (209) 474-1549
Santa Rosa (707) 576-0522
Oroville (530) 533-1576
Jackson (209) 223-3691

Notes From Our Director

So far the CA legislature is not seeking to make cuts to foster care as part of an overall fix to our economy. However, there are two changes that will potentially impact our agency:

All the counties we work with except for El Dorado are choosing to change their pay date from the 1st to the 15th of the month AFTER the month you provided foster care to a child. This allows counties to hold on to these funds for two extra weeks, during which time they can gather more interest. This has created a cash flow problem for us, as we don't have enough money to pay all our bills until we receive the county payments. As a result, in the coming months we will be moving the payment date we process reimbursements to each foster family to later in the month. Trust that we will be discussing this with each family well before making any changes.

At the Federal level there are proposed changes to Medicaid that could change what Medi-Cal services are covered for California's foster children. These changes are part of the **AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT BILL OF 2009 (ARRA), Energy & Commerce Provisions on Medicaid and the Unemployed and Health Information Technology, State Medicaid Fiscal Relief**. Please email and/or call your legislators in California and ask them to call their US Congresspersons requesting that the Congressman/woman support the House proposed Stimulus bill {AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT BILL OF 2009 (ARRA) }.

If you do not know your Congressperson, check <http://www3.capwiz.com/mygov/dbq/officials> . This will give you general email and main phone number for your specific Representative.

John

John C. Johnson, M.S.W., Psy.D., Executive Director

Training Information

R.S.V.P. whenever possible

Cameron Park	PRIDE Training Continues. "Loving Solutions" tentatively begins Feb. 19th RSVP to attend
Sacramento	Feb. 21, 10am: CPR and 1st Aid! 1st Aid 10am-12 break CPR 1-4pm Feb. 19, 6pm-8pm: "The Teen Challenge" (Sac Office will have classes the 3rd Thursday of each month from 6-8pm)
So. Lake Tahoe	Saturday, Feb 7th, 11-1 in the FFS office. Foster / Adopt Support Group. Lunch provided. Sorry, no child care. RSVP to Megan.
Stockton	Feb. 9th, 6:00 to 9:00 pm. The topic is Review of licensing regulations
Santa Rosa	Feb. 25, 9am-12pm: Understanding & Fostering Attachment: Mar. 19, 6pm-8pm: Therapeutic Issues Part I, Dr. Art Magana
Oroville /FRC	Feb. 11, 530-830: The Power of Self Control-being in charge of you Feb. 25, 530-830: Active focusing skills for children and adults through