Our Mission

Our mission is to be the bridge between the most vulnerable in our community and volunteers who make a difference.

1 MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND BOARD CHAIR
2 FINANCIALS
3 SELENA’s STORY
4 DONOR HIGHLIGHT
5 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS
6
7 EVENTS
8 VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT
9 THANK YOU DONORS
To Our Friends and Partners

This year marks the fifteenth anniversary of Child Advocates of Placer County. In the early days, we were a handful of people hoping to help out a handful of the 663 Placer County children who would enter into foster care in 2004. We stumbled a bit and nearly ran out of funds, but eventually the things took hold.

Today, we are providing CASAs to over 90% of all the foster children in our County, Mentors to dozens of at-risk youth, Family Mentors to 22 families, and volunteer “Allies” to 35 Prosper Placer families. We have CASAs working with youth in the Delinquency system, and youth involved in sex trafficking. We have CASAs sitting with young children at the courthouse while they wait to find out where they will be living. We have CASAs sitting at every court hearing taking notes for us, and CASAs helping in our office and volunteering as Case Supervisors. We have volunteers bringing therapy dogs to see youth in the Juvenile Detention Facility, youth in the Emergency Shelter, and families at drug treatment centers. And we have an established endowment fund and significant reserves in the bank.

What has driven this growth? Ask any of our volunteers. Ask CASA volunteer Lynda Kirkpatrick.

Has your CASA experience been what you expected?
“I really didn’t have expectations. Well maybe that isn’t quite true. I had hoped I could help a child and perhaps make a difference in their life. But I think this experience went well beyond what I hoped. I hadn’t expected it to affect me, but it has in a very positive way. I love doing this. I get back from these children and adults tenfold what I give. And I’ve made friends in the process. This experience and calling myself a CASA is a gift I can never repay.”
- Lynda Kirkpatrick – CASA volunteer and Family Mentor since 2013

Our success lies in our mission: to be a bridge between the most vulnerable in our community and volunteers who make a difference. This simple idea, of finding those in need and connecting them to those who want to help, is the key.

For the last four years the Children’s System of Care has reduced the number of children entering foster care by providing the families with intensive wrap around services. This has reduced the number of Placer County children in foster care, and by extension, the number of children in need of a CASA. It has also allowed us to take a wider view of how best to serve our children – to embrace a whole-family model. It has also allowed us to provide more intensive support for youth in sex trafficking, youth on probation, and youth struggling in school.

As a result, we are proud to say the in 2019 – our 15th anniversary – we are perhaps the most unique CASA program in California. This is possible because of our wonderful donors, our extremely collaborative county agencies, our bubbly Friends of CASA ladies, our consistently supportive corporate sponsors and private foundations, our dedicated board members, our passionate staff, and most importantly, our caring, consistent and reliable volunteers. Together, we are making the community we call Placer County a better place for us all.

With gratitude,

Jay Resendez
Chairman of the Board

Don Kleinfelder
Executive Director
88 CENTS of every dollar donated goes to services that directly support the advocacy of foster children in Placer County.

Total Children & Families Served: 471
Number of Active Volunteers: 304
Number of Volunteer Hours: 21,226

77% of our CASA cases closed through family reunification, adoption, or guardianship.
92% of our high school seniors completed their high school requirements, compared to less than 50% of foster children nationwide.

Statement of Activities
July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018

Revenue
$787,478

Expenses
$666,447

Operating Income
$116,314

Net Assets for FY17
$488,799
The Whole-Family Approach
Reconnecting Selena’s Family and Keeping them Whole

“For a long time, I was shy and had low self-esteem. I didn’t want to talk about things I did while I was in addiction. It was embarrassing to me - I was very shameful.” – Selena

Over the past eight years Selena and her children have been involved with all four of our programs. Initially, four of Selena’s six children received a CASA – the eldest children more than once, following an unfortunate relapse. Later, we assigned a Youth Mentor to one of her children. As Selena slowly put her life back together, she signed up for our Family Mentor program, where she received the support and friendship of yet another one of our caring community volunteers. Today, Selena has come full circle, utilizing our newest whole-family service program, Prosper Placer. With the help of our staff and many truly dedicated volunteers, Selena has found the courage to take control of her life.

“I had been through an almost 20-year addiction to meth, and in between that time, I had 4 years clean.” She says, “I had no life skills, no support, no positive support... My mom was an alcoholic when I was younger and she stopped drinking but never got me (into) recovery.” After an 8-year relapse, Selena decided “I’m tired of living this way - I just want to change!” But she was in a deep hole. Growing up she learned very few life skills, and now she was a single mother of six children.

While trying to reunify with her children, Selena was referred to our Family Mentor Program, where she met our Family Mentor volunteer, Helen Ohman. Helen would go on to not only help Selena develop life skills, but connect her to the resources and services that she needed to successfully reunify with her children, thus improving the likelihood of keeping her family together. With Helen’s help, Selena did just that. She regained custody of her children and successfully completed our Family Mentor program. However, Selena still had the stress of caring for six children while living at poverty income level. In an effort to overcome her situation, Selena took the next step to advancing to the middle class and joined Prosper Placer.

“I had no idea what to expect and so many amazing things have happened since I’ve been in this program,” says Selena. “Having allies - people that care about you that don’t judge you... I feel so comfortable with them and it’s so nice to be able to set goals and then have them check on you and ask ‘Hey, how is that goal going?’ and not get mad at you if you don’t do it, but ‘Hey, let’s keep moving forward - what other goal do you want to achieve?’ I think this is the bridge that I needed for real.”

Since she’s been in the Prosper Placer program, Selena has secured a new job as a counselor intern at Community Recovery Resources (CORR), something she’s wanted to do for years. “I remember two years ago being in therapy and telling my therapist, I really want to be a counselor. I didn’t think it was possible, but here I am.” Selena says.

Selena continues to express her gratitude for the caring volunteers in our programs who raised their hands to help her family throughout the years. But as Katja Pollman, the Program Coordinator for Prosper Placer, reminds us, “It is really Selena’s hard work, vulnerability, preparedness, and transparency that has paved the way for her to reach this place of newfound hope.”

Through her persistence and hard work, Selena now says, “I know I can get out of poverty. I just feel so confident now.” All of our volunteers who have helped her and her children along the way would agree – Selena and her family are a true success story.
In collaboration with the Children’s System of Care, Placer County Juvenile Probation and the Placer County Office of Education, Child Advocates would like to announce that we will be implementing a program to support youth who are victims of and/or at-risk of becoming involved in sex trafficking (officially called Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, or CSEC) in the coming year.

Staff members Taylor Baierlein and Jason Allen will be spearheading this collaboration with our system partners. We are excited about the potential of this collaboration to positively impact CSEC youth and young adults in our community.

The program will provide significant additional training to CASA volunteers who are assigned to CSEC youth, and will focus not only on building strong relationships between the CASA and the youth, but also creating small peer groups where the youth can form intentional communities of support. We anticipate launching the CASA CSEC pilot program in Summer 2019.

With a mission to provide meaningful opportunities to children to overcome challenges, live better lives, and reach their full potential, the Loveall Foundation For Children continues to make a major impact in the lives of the foster and at-risk children we serve in Placer County. Since 2012, the Loveall Foundation has generously provided CAPC with the financial support that has helped make it possible for us to serve over 92% of foster children in Placer County. Countless children and their families have been touched through the long-lasting impact of the volunteers and generous supporters of the Foundation.

“Any time we reach out to others, we all grow in spirit.”
~ Patricia Loveall
You Can Help Change the Life of a Child and Entire Family Right Here in our Community

www.casaplacer.org

Child Advocates of Placer County Team

Pictured (L to R) Katja Pollmann, Jose Huizar, Amber Celmer, Kristi Midgley, Frida Diaz, Julie Stark, Jason Allen, Taylor Baierlein, Don Kleinfelder, Jamie Nichols

Our Board of Directors

Jay Resendez, Chair
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Art Lyon
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Development Director

Julie Stark
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Taylor Baierlein
Program Manager
Volunteer Recruitment & Training/CASA

Jose Huizar
Program Manager
Youth Mentor/K94Kids/CASA

Jamie Nichols
Program Manager
Family Mentor/CASA

Jason Allen
Program Manager
Delinquency/CASA

Katja Pollmann
Program Manager
Prosper Placer/CASA

Frida Diaz
Program Assistant - Prosper Placer

Kristi Midgley
Family Mentor Case Manager
We couldn’t be more excited about the growth of Prosper Placer in 2018. We started the program in 2017, serving 6 families. We have since added 12 families in 2018. Our first cohort will be ready to graduate this Spring, which means that they have been with the group for 2 years. Most of the families that started the program with us are now in stable financial and improved housing situations. They are in better paying jobs that allow them to save money and provide stability for their future. Real friendships have been formed and a support group that is always there to offer advice. One of the kids has received tutoring for an entire school year from our allies and was able to catch up to his peers, boosting his self-confidence and overall performance at school. We are extremely proud of the many positive outcomes that our curriculum continues to allow for these families.

Our new group in Auburn started with 10 families in the Spring and grew by 5 families in the Fall, coming from our Latino community. We are able to facilitate this group with Frida Diaz, our bilingual Program Assistant, with the help of bilingual volunteers as well. With help from their allies, the families have been working on goals and attended healthy eating classes. They will start a finance a module in January.

As the three groups continue to grow together, we celebrate and share our traditions with each other. We have joined the Halloween traditions with the Dia de los Muertos, also learning about Danish, Polish, Honduran and Mexican Christmas traditions. We are looking forward to 2019 and are ready for our new group in Rocklin at SS. Peter and Paul to begin.

“Your guidance and care is so appreciated... We’re not used to having anyone care like you do and we can never thank you enough.” – Laura

Because of our upcoming growth and need, we are looking for people who are interested in taking part in our K9’s 4 Kids Program. Although most of our dogs are certified therapy dogs, you can also certify your pup by completing a Canine Good Citizen (CGC) certification at Petco.

For additional information, or if we can answer your questions, please contact the Program Manager, Jose Huizar at jose@casaplaer.org or 530-887-1006.

“Hi...My name is Trapper. (Golden Retriever) and my favorite day of the week is Friday because this is the day that I get to go to JDC and see the kids. We have so much fun together! We run and play chase or we play ball. Sometimes I just lie down and let the kids rub my belly or I lay my head in their lap and let them stroke my silky ears. I really think they like it too! They get to just release their stress and be kids again and many talk about their own pets that they have at home. Sometimes there are several pups that go visit. Most recently my friend “October” has gone with me to see the kids. She is in advanced training to become a service dog. It is the best feeling in the world to bring some normalcy to the lives of these kids.”

Our K9’s 4 Kids program continues to serve at-risk kids in our community who are placed at the local Children’s Emergency Receiving Home and Juvenile Detention Facility. Moreover, this year we will be expanding our program to serve mothers and their children who are at a transitional housing facility in Auburn. Our K9’s 4 Kids program gives youth a chance to love and be loved, experience normalcy in a stressful environment, and foster an accepting connection from young people who have a hard time connecting with others.

“It is such a rewarding feeling to walk into a facility with Fiona and see kids smile or hear them excited to see a dog. Fiona was able to make kids feel good while petting her.” – K9’s 4 Kids Volunteer Dog Handler

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In 2019 we celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Spring Tea and Fashion Show. The event was the creation of Debby Ziegler, who brought together a group of like-minded friends to make a difference for children in our county. It was Debby’s desire to create a sustainable model for women to work on an event that supplemented the fundraising activities of Child Advocates combined with a little social activity. The idea took off and the first Spring Tea raised $5,000. Over the years, the Friends group grew, and the fundraising efforts hit $50,000 in what has become an integral part of funding for the programs and staff at Child Advocates of Placer County.

Membership in this group includes volunteer CASAs and Mentors, former Board members, business women and others. The common core value is a shared passion for children and the willingness to jump in and host a soldout event that sets the bar year over year and brings together some of the most creative table décor and fashion to hit Placer County. The talents of this group of women are endless and includes artisans, makers, innovators, and show stoppers. This is a must-attend event. So, don’t miss out and mark your calendar for Saturday, March 9 for the Friends of CASA 2019 Spring Tea & Fashion Show at Orchard Creek Lodge in Lincoln.

For Friends of CASA membership information, contact Sarah Prince (530) 305-9351.

Jeanne Mabry, 2019 Chair
Spring Tea & Fashion Show
This year’s recipient of our Annual CAPC Award of Appreciation for Service to Foster Children is longtime supporter and volunteer, Art Lyon. Art’s commitment and dedication to CAPC dates back to 2011, when Art was sworn in by the judge as an Officer of the Placer County Juvenile Detention Court and received his first CASA case. “After retiring from a career in banking I wanted to give back to the community,” Art said during an interview with the “The Link” magazine, “I wanted to find an organization that was local, kid-related and meaningful; one where I could feel I could make a difference.”

Art has served six boys ages 7 to 16 during his years as a CASA and Youth Mentor. “I think the best part of being a CASA volunteer is that we fill a unique role. We are not professional child behavioral specialists or social workers, those important services are provided by the county. CASAs are trained volunteers who care about kids and can devote some time each week to help them thrive, to push them in the direction of becoming productive adult citizens in our community. CASAs frequently offer a child that may have been dealt an awfully tough hand their first relationship with a consistent, caring, and reliable adult mentor. Someone they can role model. This can make a huge difference in a child's entire life. I know this is true because I've seen it with my own eyes.”

Now a member of the Board of Directors for CAPC, Art not only continues to serve as a CASA and Mentor volunteer for CAPC, but he has been a generous donor throughout that time. He is helping to make it possible for us to provide other caring volunteers in the community the skills and training to become advocates and mentors in our programs.
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Through our programs we work to empower foster youth, at-risk youth, and young adults in Placer County.

Make A Difference in 2019!

For donation, advertising or sponsorship info contact:
Amber Celmer
Development Director
amber@casaplacer.org
(530) 887-1006

Child Advocates of Placer County - 10
Upcoming Events

Friends of CASA
10th Annual Tea & Luncheon
March 9, 2019
Sun City Lincoln

SAVE the DATE
June 24, 2019
The Ridge Golf Course, Auburn, CA

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