



Making a
Difference
One Child
at a Time



Building a Volunteer-Driven Future

In FY 2010, CASA of Los Angeles successfully transitioned from a public/private partnership supported primarily by public funds into an entrepreneurial, volunteer-driven nonprofit funded by community grants and donations.

This change, initiated by significant cutbacks in state funding, was driven by our Board of Directors who committed themselves to an activist role in raising the funds we need. Their new Development Committee was tasked with personal outreach to businesses, foundations, organizations, and individuals. Every Board Member provided financial support, and was highly involved in securing funds through prospect identification, cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship.

“In FY 2010, we became a fully-fledged nonprofit, thanks to the many people who stepped up to support us and ensure a future for foster children.”

Dilys Tosteson Garcia
Executive Director

In FY 2010, CASA of Los Angeles advocated for 562 of the most vulnerable at-risk foster children while undergoing major organizational change. **With only half of our previous budget and one third the staff, we were proud to provide similar levels of service this year as offered before the state funding cuts.**

New Initiatives Will:

1. **Increase the number of children we serve.**
2. **Enhance the quality of training and support** given to our front-line CASA volunteers, and better equip them with resources and tools to function more effectively as child advocates.
3. **Recruit new volunteers** aggressively, including more men, African-Americans, Latinos, and other nationalities and ethnic groups currently underrepresented as volunteers.
4. **Provide greater expertise** with specialized tracks on Early Childhood, Transition Age Youth, and Educational Advocacy for volunteers and staff.
5. **Scale up volunteer recruitment and retention** by expanding our use of technology and communications.
6. **Increase our “footprint”** in sprawling Los Angeles County by better engaging our many diverse communities and moving our program closer to potential volunteers and the children we serve.



Ensuring Stability in Transition

“As we reflect on our accomplishments in 2010, our hearts are filled with gratitude and hope.”

Nearly one hundred times a day, a child in California is placed in foster care. Los Angeles County has over 25,000 children in foster care—more than any other county in the United States. In the face of such challenges, we’ve seen through the work of our CASA volunteers many of these foster children find healing and hope. Many were matched with the best possible new foster families and given permanent homes, successfully adopted or safely reunited with their parents, and given access to much-needed services.

In June 2010, a new CASA/LA Executive Director with extensive public/private sector experience in marketing and executive management was hired. She began building a new senior management team, including a longstanding CASA volunteer and staffer as Program Director, and a new Volunteer Director experienced in at-risk youth services. This new team is focused on implementing the Strategic Plan to develop a more cost-effective volunteer-driven organization with the capacity to serve more children.

I am very proud to present this 2010 Annual Report for CASA of Los Angeles. We have accomplished many exciting new things this year, as you’ll see in these pages. For all these accomplishments, on behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to extend our sincere appreciation to our volunteers, staff, donors and supporters who have given of their time, talents and treasure to help CASA of Los Angeles fulfill its vital humanitarian mission, serving the most vulnerable and at-risk population in Los Angeles County—its children in foster care.

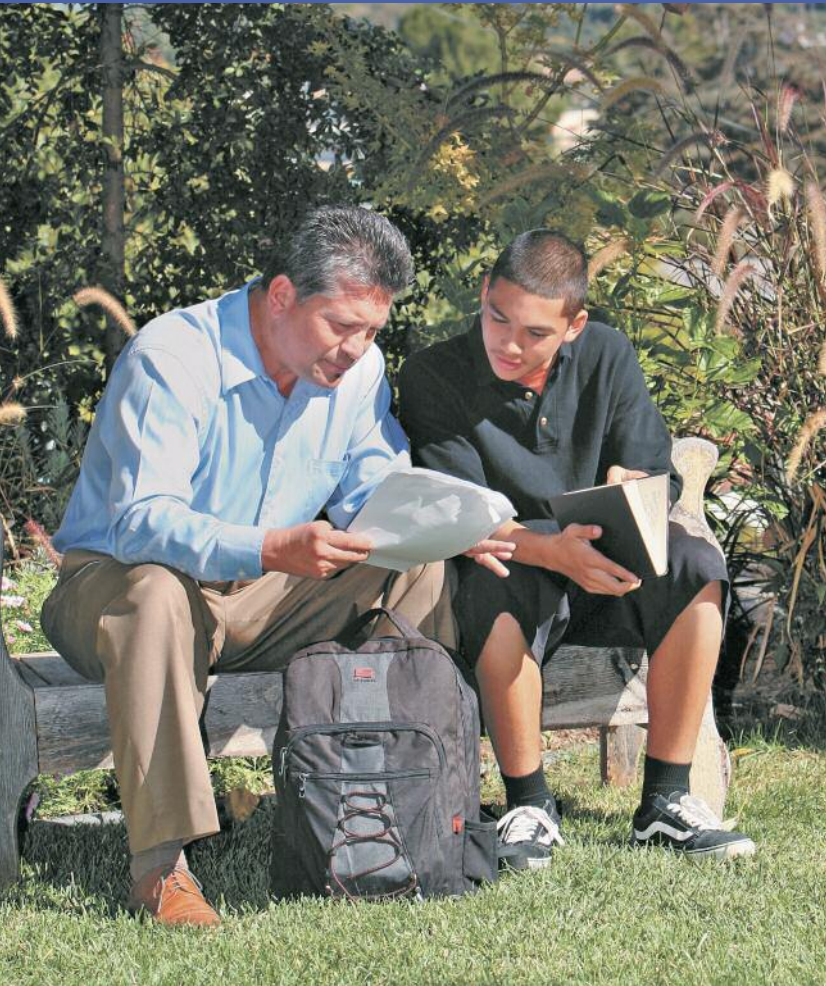
Patricia Trendacosta

Patricia Y. Trendacosta, Esq.
President, Board of Directors

Timeless Values Serve Foster Children Well

"A CASA's work almost always results in information and recommendations that not only help the judges make better decisions, but also lead to better outcomes for each child."

—Judge Michael Nash
Presiding Judge, Los Angeles Juvenile Court, CA
Secretary, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges



Our Mission

CASA of Los Angeles exists to improve the lives of children in the foster care system.

Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteers work with each child individually to make sure that these children receive the support and help they need.

We recruit, train and supervise community volunteers, court-appointed to:

- Advocate for the child's best interests in the court and in the community
- Investigate the circumstances of the child's life
- Monitor compliance with court orders, and work to obtain court-ordered services for the child

We believe all children are entitled to stable, safe, permanent homes—with caring guardians or parents (natural or adoptive)—without delay.

Our Vision

A Casa for Every
Child Who Needs One

An Le, an AmeriCorps Member, accepts her CASA certification from Judge Michael Nash.



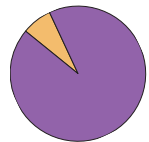
Strength in Numbers



In FY 2010, We Served as Many Foster Children as Ever:

- CASA volunteers in Los Angeles County: 324
- Children in Los Angeles County who received individual advocacy: 562
- Children who were comforted prior to their first court appearance and given an orientation about courts and the dependency system: 1,777
- Children who were accompanied to their follow-up court appearances: 5,140

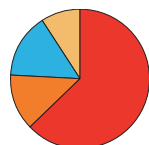
Who Are CASA Volunteers?



93% women
7% men



15% under age 39
19% age 40-49
18% age 50-59
45% over age 60
3% age unknown

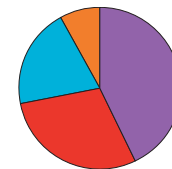


63% White
13% African-American
15% Hispanic
9% Asian or other

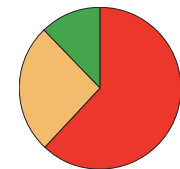


29% employed full time
25% self-employed or employed part-time
14% not employed
28% retired
4% student/other

Foster Children Who Receive Ongoing Advocacy:



43% African-American
29% Hispanic
20% White
8% Asian or other



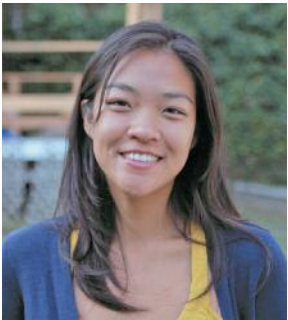
62% age 6-15
26% over age 15
12% under age 6

Total Number of Children in the Dependency Court System in Los Angeles County: 25,000

Our Stories



Helping Those Who Cannot Help Themselves



CASA Joyce, studying to become a doctor, uses her medical background to advocate for a better quality of life for Marvin, a medically fragile foster child.

Imagine you're four years old living with your sister at your grandmother's house—but you can't talk, because your feeding tube and tracheotomy get in the way—and you can't walk either. But you can feel. Your grandmother tries to help you, but she's overwhelmed. Your five-year-old sister doesn't understand. So you feel alone and scared most of the time...

...until one lucky day you meet Joyce, your new CASA, who's training to become a medical doctor. She talks directly to you and truly tries to understand your situation and your needs.

Joyce also starts working with your doctors, helping your grandmother get better explanations of your conditions and the treatments you need, so she feels calmer, more in control of your care, and has more time for you. And because Joyce recognizes that outsiders often think of you as only your diagnoses—rather than seeing you as a child with unknown potential—she is able to intercede with the Regional Center and school district to get you the help you really need.



"I have seen CASA volunteers help find services for children that I was told were not available and I have seen them find permanent placements for children when our system faltered in that regard. In many instances, the efforts of CASA volunteers were absolutely heroic."

The Value of CASA Volunteers — One Judge's Perspective

One of the areas in which a CASA volunteer is most helpful to a judge is adoption.

Every child is entitled to grow up in a healthy, safe, loving and permanent home, and one way to ensure this is through adoption. In Los Angeles, we have completed 25,000 adoptions for children from our foster care system since 1998.

Over the years, I have seen CASA volunteers impact adoptions in five key areas:

They review case files thoroughly.

Taking the time and effort to review court files as thoroughly as possible helps judges ensure the best possible outcome for the child.

They get to know everyone involved in the child's life.

When you know everyone who touches the life of the child, it often opens doors to adoption.

They improve a child's stability.

By advocating for the child, a CASA volunteer builds their trust and over time,

that child might be amenable to services such as counseling. These services will not only help the child's well-being but may also help the child's emotional state, rendering a child considered "unadoptable" into someone a family would welcome into their home.

They help obtain missing

documents. Because CASA volunteers have small caseloads, they are able to navigate the maze of paperwork that often holds up adoption proceedings. CASA volunteers help fill in the gaps in a system fraught with cracks.

They serve as an extra set of eyes.

A CASA volunteer is a huge asset on a case as they add an extra set of eyes and ears observing how a child is doing and reporting that to the court.

They continually provide feedback and serve in enabling the best possible placement for the child.

The text and quote are adapted from an article by the Hon. Michael Nash of the Los Angeles Superior Court Juvenile Division, written for CASA's national magazine, The Connection (Winter 2010). Reprinted with permission.

"Glamour Gowns" Celebrates Teens



"These beautiful children, so full of potential, have rewarded me in more ways than I could ever count. My work with them has made me realize how much we sometimes take for granted."

—Judith Sweet,
CASA of Los Angeles volunteer since 2002

CASA of Los Angeles is most grateful to the Glamour Gowns Committee for producing and organizing this event, under the auspices of 2010 Glamour Gowns Chairperson Cortez Wilks. This event has become CASA/LA's biggest event of the year, celebrating hundreds of teenage girls in foster care as they transition into adulthood. Held in the Los Angeles Convention Center in March 2010, more than 350 teens experienced "the royal treatment," complete with a personal shopper to help each girl pick out a formal gown, accessories, shoes and cosmetics. Special thanks go to Los Angeles City Councilwoman Jan Perry for underwriting the cost of the Convention Center, and to local organizations such as SHARE, Inc. and David's Bridal, Masquerade, and Chinese Laundry for their most generous support of the Glamour Gowns program.

Members of the 2010 Glamour Gowns Committee, pictured above from left to right: Joanne Solov, Christine Yick, Tracee Wilks, Cortez Wilks, Jennifer Parker-Stanton, Michaela Pereira, Karen Braverman-Freeman, Sue Marshall, Brenda Galloway, and Sandi Romero-Boada. Not pictured: Jacquie Dolan and Stacey Horn.



CASA Volunteers Change Lives

Judy Smith, 2010 CASA Volunteer of the Year, is a wonderful example of how one woman can transform many lives. A CASA since 1993, Judy has passionately advocated for 21 children aged six months to 20 years, and has spent hours speaking on behalf of the CASA program. She has traveled to attend court hearings in Monterey Park and Antelope Valley, traversing the County to visit her CASA children. Her cases involved everything from adoption and medical services to transition planning for 18+ youth aging out of foster care. When one girl's caretakers prevented sibling contact with her, Judy facilitated visits. After a visit from the authorities, Judy intervened and resolved a teen-ager's "acting out." She got one lonely, depressed 13-year-old boy, abandoned to foster care years earlier, referred to a family-finding program where he was discovered to be of Native American heritage. Judy participated in every meeting with tribal members, and helped the boy connect to a family and tribal community he never knew he had.

"None of my CASA children have had adult figures in their lives who really care about them, who take time to listen to them, and who keep showing up. CASA has given me the opportunity to meet and get to know wonderful children, and the longer I do this work, the more I realize the difference having a CASA makes to these children. I just wish every child could have a CASA."

—Judy Smith
17-year CASA volunteer



2010's CASA Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon, held April 29, 2010 at the California Endowment, honored Volunteer of the Year Judy Smith and all CASAs with 25, 20, 15, 10, five or two years of service.



FY 2010 Financials

July 1, 2009 — June 30, 2010

California's budget crisis made 2010 a difficult year. Upon losing significant funding from Los Angeles County Dependency Court, our Board restructured the organization from a court-managed program funded primarily by public sector funds into a nonprofit successfully supported by community donations.

At a time when other agencies were forced to close their doors, CASA of Los Angeles developed diverse funding from foundations, corporations, individuals and some government grants. Los Angeles County Superior Court remains committed to the CASA program by providing free office space in Monterey Park and Antelope Valley dependency court locations.

As a result, CASA of Los Angeles is poised to offer its unique services to even more children in 2011.

FY 2010 Financials

July 1, 2009 — June 30, 2010

ASSETS:	\$461,460
LIABILITIES:	\$70,155
FUNDING:	
Government	\$ 439,501
Foundations	251,712
Individuals	254,506
Organizations and corporations	37,541
Donated services	32,200
Interest and other	685
TOTAL FUNDING:	\$ 1,016,145
EXPENSES:	
Salaries and benefits	\$607,297
Professional services	230,462
AmeriCorps volunteers	26,750
Rent and storage	35,791
Insurance	13,108
Training, travel and volunteer recognition	29,194
Office expenses	18,976
All other expenses	21,297
TOTAL EXPENSES:	\$982,875

Source: Independent audit report prepared by accounting firm of Lodgen, Lacher, Golditch, Sardi, Saunders & Howard LLP, dated March 14, 2011



Thank You

Generous Donors Keep Children's Hopes Alive

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"Being a CASA Volunteer has made me grateful for my blessings in life and has renewed my passion to give back."

Thank You State and National **CASA**

CASA of Los Angeles gratefully acknowledges the support and expertise of its state and national organizations:

CALIFORNIA CASA supports foster youth and volunteers in the state by strengthening, sustaining, and growing the California CASA network. In addition to technical assistance provided to local staff and volunteers, California CASA's work in promoting child welfare legislation creates positive change on a state-wide level. California CASA aims to bring the CASA perspective to lawmakers and policy analysts. For more about California CASA, see www.californiacasa.org.

NATIONAL CASA ASSOCIATION is a network of over 1,000 local community program offices like CASA of Los Angeles. National CASA provides critical leadership, support and training so that each of these programs can provide quality advocacy and lead the continued growth of the CASA network. National CASA also works to raise public awareness of foster children and the role of CASA volunteers through national media advertising and other programs. And finally, National CASA supports its network of community program offices through resource development efforts and direct grants. To learn more about National CASA, see www.casaforchildren.org.





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When you help CASA of Los Angeles change foster children's lives, it enriches your life:

- **Double your donation** through your company's matching gift program
- **Donate on line** at www.casala.org
- **Send your check** to CASA of Los Angeles, Development Department, 201 Centre Plaza Drive, Suite 1100, Monterey Park, CA 91754-2142
- **Save capital gains taxes** on appreciated securities when you transfer stock
- **Leave a lasting legacy** of better futures for children by making a planned gift to CASA of Los Angeles through your will or trust—or name CASA of Los Angeles as beneficiary of your retirement account or life insurance policy
- **Honor your loved ones** through Tributes for any special occasion (you and the honoree will receive letters from CASA of Los Angeles) or make Memorial Gifts in your loved one's name
- **Make an in-kind gift** to the children we serve, who always need pro-bono dental/medical/legal services, donated school products, birthday books, toys and gift cards; other donations we need include office supplies, new computers, digital equipment, and auction/gift bag items

All your gifts are tax deductible because CASA of Los Angeles is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Monterey Park

CASA of Los Angeles
Edmund D. Edelman Children's Court
201 Centre Plaza Drive, Suite 1100
Monterey Park, CA 91754-2142
Phone: 323-526-6666

For more information about CASA volunteering
in Los Angeles, e-mail: Volunteer@casala.org

Antelope Valley

CASA of Los Angeles
Alfred J. McCourtney Juvenile Justice Center
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For more information about CASA volunteering in
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