

1 **Snow White, COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE**

2 **CASA OF LOS ANGELES**

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7 **SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**
8 **FOR THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES**
9 **COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE REPORT**

10 In the Matter of:) Case No.: ABC123456
11)
12 **Ariel Triton**) Date of Hearing: 12/02/2016
13) Department: CC411
14 A Child.) Type of Hearing: P26
15)

16 **CASE HISTORY:**

17 Ariel Triton, thirteen years old (DOB 5/30/2003), initially came to the Court's attention
18 in October 2003. A petition was sustained December 2003 Pursuant to WIC 300 (a) and (b).
19 Family reunification was terminated for mother, Mary Triton on July 2005 and father, Joe
20 Triton, passed away in May 2006.

21 ICWA does not apply.

22 CASA was appointed on 4/16/14.

23 **CURRENT STATUS:**

24 **Current Placement:** Ariel is currently placed with an FFA Agency Children's Bureau
25 resource family Andrew and Teresa Holt. The Holt's want to adopt Ariel.

26 **Family:** The last known whereabouts of Ariel's biological mother, Mary Triton, is the
27 Century Regional Detention Facility in Lynwood, CA. Ariel has not had contact with her for
28 more than two and half years.

1 **Education:** Ariel is in the 7th grade and attends St. Nicholas Middle School in North
2 Hollywood. Ariel has been accepted into the United Friends of the Children College
3 Readiness Program and will start the program in January 2017.

4 Per the Court's Order of 2/18/16, the CASA is the sole educational rights holder.

5 **Medical:** On 3/26/15, Orthopedic Surgeon Dr. Roy performed left ankle and knee
6 guided growth surgery and removal of osteochondroma from the right tibia at Children's
7 Hospital Los Angeles. During each examination, Dr. Roy has stressed the importance of
8 consistent post-surgery monitoring of the growth of the left knee and ankle. On 8/9/16, Dr.
9 Roy examined Ariel and is pleased with the progress.

10 **Mental health:** Since being placed with the Holts, Adoption Placement Support
11 Services (APSS) therapist, Ledette Gambino, has been seeing Ariel for trauma focused
12 cognitive behavioral therapy. Ariel meets with Ms. Gambino every other week. Ariel has also
13 been receiving therapy related to behavioral issues from Wrap Around therapist Athena
14 Cummings, MFT.

15 **CHILD'S POSITION:**

16 Ariel has consistently told the CASA that she is happy living with the Holts. On 8/16,
17 Ms. Holt and Ariel traveled via airplane to attend a wedding. It was Ariel's first time to fly on
18 a plane. Ariel told the CASA she had a great time on the trip. Ariel reports that she is
19 enjoying her school and wants to attend Catholic High School next year. She is making friends
20 and reports to be happy socially. Ariel understands that the Holts want to adopt her. On
21 11/6/16, the CASA asked Ariel if she wanted to be adopted by the Holt's. She repeatedly told
22 the CASA she did want to be adopted by the Holts. During the 11/18/16 wrap meeting, when
23 asked where do you see yourself in 5 years? Ariel responded, "home from college with Teresa
24 and Andrew celebrating Thanksgiving."

25 CASA met with Ariel on 8/4/16, 8/9/16, 9/3/16, 9/14/16, 9/26/16, 9/29/16, 10/4/16,
26 10/11/16, 10/31/16, 11/6/16, and 11/29/16. And via telephone or text on 9/3/16, 9/11/16,
27 9/12/16, 9/20/16, 9/21/16, 10/2/16, 10/4/16, 10/7/16, 10/8/16, 10/12/16, 10/16/16, 10/22/16,
28

1 10/22/16, 10/29/16, 10/30/16, 10/31/16, 11/2/16, 11/3/16, 11/9/16, 11/16/16, 11/18/16,
2 11/24/16 and 11/28/16.

3 **CASA INTERVIEWS:**

4 **Teresa and Andrew Holt, foster parents:** When Ariel moved in with the Holts, Ms.
5 Holt commenced ten weeks family leave from her employment, so she could be with Ariel
6 during the transition period. The Holts report that they are involved with Ariel's school,
7 attending all her volleyball games, volunteering at school events and communicating with
8 teachers, and monitoring her grades. The Holts have arranged for Ariel to meet with a tutor to
9 address some reading issues and are working with Ariel to apply to Catholic High School for
10 next fall. Regarding schoolwork, the Holts report that Ariel is doing brilliantly at school.
11 Every night she comes home and does her homework and is open to asking for help when
12 needed.

13 The Holt's report that on several occasions since 8/5/16, Ariel has exhibited sporadic
14 defiant behavior, which has escalated over the past three weeks. After these incidents, Ariel
15 has apologized and communicated with the Holts that she wants to try to find better ways to
16 communicate and "work things through as a family." The Holts have communicated with the
17 CSW, FFA SW, the Wrap Around team and the CASA regarding these specific incidents and
18 Ariel's behavior. The Holts refer to their home as Ariel's "forever home" and are "not
19 wavering" in their commitment to adopt Ariel.

20 CASA met with Ms. and Mr. Holt in person on 8/9/16, 9/7/16, 10/4/16, 10/31/16,
21 11/6/16, 11/18/16, 11/22/16, 11/29/16 and communicated via telephone, email or text on
22 8/8/16, 8/16/16, 8/18/16, 8/22/16, 8/24/16, 8/25/16, 9/12/16, 10/10/16, 10/16/16, 11/7/16,
23 11/14/16, 11/23/16, 11/29/16.

24 **Ledette Gambino, M.A., MFT Registered Intern, APSS therapist:**

25 Ms. Gambino is meeting with Ariel every other week. Ariel agreed to Trauma Focused
26 Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TFCBT). Based on questionnaires of Ariel and the Holts,
27 TFCBT is focusing on interpersonal relationships. Ms. Gambino's goal with TFCBT is to
28 connect the narrative of Ariel's trauma stories to her emotions. Of 12 possible traumas, Ariel

1 has experienced 7. Ms. Gambino reports overall, Ariel is doing remarkably well considering
2 the multiple traumas she has experienced. Ms. Gambino reports that Ariel is not fully
3 comfortable opening up to or communicating with her yet.

4 CASA spoke with L. Gambino via telephone on 9/2/16 and 11/17/16.

5 **Lisa Tush, Ariel's English teacher, St. Nicholas:**

6 In 9/16, the Holts met with Ariel's English teacher, Ms. Tush to get a better
7 understanding of academic expectations, explain Ariel's education history and formulate a plan
8 for her academic success. Ms. Tush reports that Ariel is doing well academically, and she
9 anticipates her grades will improve second semester as the routine is established and she knows
10 what to expect.

11 CASA met with Ms. Tush in person on 8/31/16 and 9/7/16 and communicated by email
12 on 11/21/16.

13 **Chris Salenetti, Ariel's Math and Social Studies teacher, St. Nicholas Middle**

14 **School:**

15 Mr. Salenetti reported that, Ariel is doing an "awesome job" with her grades. Although
16 she's a bit inconsistent at times, it's something to be expected with her meetings, sports, and
17 homework. Mr. Salenetti reports that she also seems to be doing well socially. He stated that
18 she seems to have made some good friends and seemed to have a good time playing on the
19 volleyball team. He reported that Ariel is pleasant in class and always wants to do the right
20 thing.

21 The CASA met with Ariel's math and social studies teacher, Mr. Salenetti in person on
22 8/31/16 for Back to School Night and on 9/7/16 and 11/29/16 for parent teacher conferences.

23
24 **SUMMARY AND CASA'S POSITION:**

25 Ariel is a smart, resourceful thirteen-year old who now has the potential to proceed on a
26 positive path with the assistance of productive and supportive guidance from the Holts.
27 Academically, she is thriving beyond all expectations. She has had no behavior issues at
28

1 school. She joined the volleyball team during the fall and has made friends with her
2 teammates/classmates.

3 CASA feels that Ariel's placement with the Holts has provided her with the most
4 beneficial relationship and circumstances she's ever been afforded. The Holts are loving,
5 compassionate, and very committed to every aspect of providing Ariel with parental,
6 emotional, and academic support. Prior to committing to foster Ariel, the Holts were made
7 fully aware of Ariel's traumas, family, medical and emotional background and numerous
8 unsuccessful placements. Ariel is making a lot of progress and while there has been some
9 defiant behavior she has been able to express herself better than she did in the past. CASA
10 believes that it is important for Ariel to continue to receive trauma focused, cognitive
11 behavioral therapy through APSS.

12 The CASA has observed Ariel and the Holts together on numerous occasions over the
13 past six months, and they have clearly bonded and enjoy each other's company. The CASA is
14 optimistic that Ariel's placement with the Holt's, and ultimate adoption, will have a life-long
15 positive impact on her, and her the opportunity to have a family that loves and supports her.

16 **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

17 Based on the facts and circumstances stated above, the CASA respectfully recommends
18 the following:

- 19 1. Ariel to remain suitably placed;
- 20 2. DCFS to ensure Ariel continues to receive trauma focused, cognitive behavioral
21 therapy through APSS;
- 22 3. Adoption be identified as the permanent plan.; and
- 23 4. Teresa H. and Andrew H. be identified as prospective adoptive parents.

24
25 Respectfully submitted,

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28 Snow White, CASA Volunteer

Aurora Swan, Advocate Supervisor