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News Release

Contact: *Amanda Schaap*
Phone: 858-598-2213 Email: amandas@speakupnow.org

Voices for Children Offers Online Information Sessions for Volunteers

(March 19, 2020) RIVERSIDE COUNTY, CA—In response to the Coronavirus / COVID-19 pandemic, Voices for Children's (VFC) Riverside County program announced it will expand its offerings to host upcoming volunteer Information Sessions online. The organization operates the region's Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program, a volunteer-based model providing support and advocacy to children in foster care.

Court Appointed Special Advocate volunteers are matched one-on-one with a child or sibling group who has been removed from their home due to abuse or neglect and has entered foster care. A CASA spends time with the child, works to understand their needs, communicates with professionals on the case including social workers and attorneys, and advocates for the child's best interest to the judge who is making decisions about the child's future.

Children enter the foster care system due to abuse, neglect, or abandonment. The uncertainty and anxiety of the Coronavirus / COVID-19 pandemic is likely to compound the effects of trauma already experienced by youth in foster care. In addition, the child welfare sector may face a multitude of challenges, including investigating child abuse, providing necessary services to children, protecting the health of youth in group homes or those with elderly caregivers, finding support for college-aged youth who have no home to which they can return, and more.

In an effort to provide the unparalleled support of a CASA volunteer to more youth, Voices for Children is encouraging volunteers who are interested in helping this vulnerable population to learn more by signing up for an online Information Session. Trainings are scheduled for the following dates, with others to be announced at www.speakupnow.org/information-sessions.

- Saturday, March 21, 9:30 - 11:00 AM
- Wednesday, March 25, 4 - 5:30 PM
- Thursday, April 2, 9:00 – 10:30 AM

Since beginning to serve Riverside County in 2015, VFC has grown to serve more than 400 of the county's children annually. As the only nonprofit organization designated by the court to operate the CASA program in Riverside County, VFC continues to grow its CASA program to reach more children who need an advocate. Voices for Children provides all of the training and on-going support CASA volunteers need to advocate for the child to whom they are assigned.

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ABOUT VOICES FOR CHILDREN

Founded in 1980, Voices for Children (VFC) transforms the lives of abused, neglected, and abandoned children in foster care in Riverside and San Diego Counties by providing them with trained volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs). CASA volunteers advocate for a foster child or sibling group in Court, school, and in the community to ensure their needs are met. VFC believes that every child deserves a safe and permanent home, and strives to provide a CASA volunteer to every child in the foster care system who needs one. Last year, VFC CASAs and staff advocated on behalf of more than 3,200 foster children across Riverside and San Diego Counties. For more information, visit www.speakupnow.org.

