



MISSION

Voices for Children transforms the lives of abused, abandoned, or neglected children by providing them with trained, volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs).

VISION

Voices for Children believes that every child deserves a safe and permanent home and, to that end, will provide a trained CASA volunteer to every abused, abandoned, or neglected child who needs one and advocate to improve the lives of children in the foster care system.

FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO AND BOARD CHAIR

Dear Friends,

We are excited to share this year's Impact Report with you. This annual report allows us to illustrate how you have nurtured the lives of children and youth in our community through your support of Voices for Children. In the pages that follow, you will find inspiring examples of how CASA volunteers spark hope in the lives of some of our community's most vulnerable young people.

When children experience abuse or neglect and it is unsafe for them to remain in their homes, they enter foster care. Each child and family is assigned to a juvenile court judge who makes all of the decisions about what happens next. In California and around the country, judges appoint exceptional community volunteers to advocate for the child's best interests and to get to know the child in a holistic way. These volunteers are called Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs).

CASA volunteers work hard to lighten the heavy hearts of the children for whom they advocate. CASAs guide their assigned youth through some of the darkest days of their childhood. With compassion and commitment, CASAs learn as much as they can about a child's circumstances, advocate for their unmet needs, and work tirelessly to ensure brighter days ahead.

In San Diego and Riverside Counties, Voices for Children is the only organization authorized by the local courts to recruit, train, and support CASA volunteers. Children experiencing the complex child welfare system rely on Voices for Children to ensure they will have their very own CASA volunteer when they need one. VFC is also honored to serve as the CASA program for the Pechanga Band of Indians Tribal Court.

Thanks to Voices for Children's amazing corps of CASA volunteers and our committed professional staff, Voices for Children provided direct advocacy to 2,315 youth in foster care across San Diego and Riverside Counties as well as case monitoring services to hundreds of other children in foster care who might need an advocate in the future.

All of this is possible because of you – our CASA volunteers, our Board members, our donors, our community champions, and our steadfast friends. We are so grateful for the tremendous impact you have made in the lives of the children we serve.

With appreciation, always,



Jessica Muñoz

Jessica Muñoz, Esq., MFS
President & CEO



Kristi E. Pfister

Kristi E. Pfister, Esq.
Chair, Board of Directors





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The impact that you can make as a CASA is life-changing for both your case child and yourself. Being a CASA perfectly illustrates the idea that ‘one person can change someone’s life.’ This experience provides both of us the chance to learn and grow. And, it is wonderful to advocate for someone who often does not have a voice.” - CASA KERI, RIVERSIDE COUNTY

Advocacy Starts with a Spark

Children in foster care deserve our support to help them thrive. Voices for Children (VFC) recruits, trains, and supports Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteers who advocate for these children in court, school, and community settings, ensuring their needs are met and their voices heard. CASA volunteers are the spark that ignites change and hope in the lives of children in foster care.

The childhood of a youth in foster care can be marked by trauma, disruption, and loss. **A CASA represents a stable, trusted relationship with an adult who sparks hope during the darkest of times in their life.** What seems like an insignificant action to most people — listening to concerns, meeting for a meal, and offering trust, safety, and respect — is paramount for the children we serve because these actions let them know **they matter**. A CASA volunteer's dedicated advocacy, support, and mere presence can be a constant light that can make a world of difference in a child's life and lead them toward a more hopeful future.

VFC is the only nonprofit designated by the Superior Courts in San Diego and Riverside Counties to connect foster youth with CASA volunteers. In FY23–24, VFC supported 1,222 CASA volunteers in these counties. This year, the organization focused on leveraging its CASA model, resources, and connections to meet the new challenges children and families impacted by the child welfare system are facing.

Key initiatives included:

1. Program Innovation: Both counties are innovating the CASA model to make it more

accessible, effective, and inclusive for all children. In Riverside County, the new staff role of Distance Advocacy Specialist now serves children placed outside the county. In San Diego County, our robust Case Liaison program continues to strengthen relationships with Juvenile Court professionals to identify and serve youth and families needing additional support.

2. Community Presence and CASA Impact: VFC bolstered its reputation as a trusted organization, ensuring our CASA volunteers' impact on children's well-being is widely recognized and supported. The *"Your Voice, Their Future"* campaign exceeded its goal of serving 150 children, assigning CASA volunteers to 241 children in foster care.

3. Sustainable Funding and Resources: Collaboration across departments facilitated site visits with funders, securing a balance of public and private funding. New office spaces in both counties reflect VFC's mission and values, providing welcoming environments for staff and volunteers.

4. Thought Leadership in Child Welfare: VFC continues to lead the most prominent juvenile justice CASA program and the largest CASA program in California.

This report highlights the importance of one caring adult in a child in foster care's life and the impact of our dedicated CASA volunteers. By showing up in meaningful ways, these volunteers help fulfill VFC's mission: providing a CASA to every child in need.

BY THE NUMBERS:

- **2,315** children served with advocacy by Voices for Children across San Diego and Riverside Counties
- **1,222** community members served as CASA volunteers
- **1,961** court reports were completed during the last FY
- **222** Voices for Children CASAs held educational rights on behalf of their case youth
- **337** cases closed while served by a Voices for Children CASA ended in reunification, adoption, or guardianship



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What makes a CASA unique to youth in foster care? CASAs make a big difference in these kids' lives, advocating for what the child needs, from education to mental or physical health services to assisting with maintaining family ties. But most importantly, CASAs provide continuity.”

– CASA MARK, SAN DIEGO COUNTY

CASAS

MAKE THE *Difference*

A child who has a CASA volunteer is more likely to:



Find a safe,
permanent home



Experience fewer
foster placements



Have access to
more resources



Avoid re-entry
into the system



Spend less time
in the child welfare and
juvenile justice systems



Succeed in school



Have a sense
of acceptance
and self-worth

*“To give a child a CASA volunteer is to give them a voice.
To give them a voice is to give them hope, and to give them
hope is to give them the world.”*

– PAMELA, A FORMER YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE

OUR COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION



Our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is a cornerstone of our Strategic Plan.

This year, we worked on ensuring all of our CASA volunteers have this crucial understanding when dealing with our population of youth and families. During the FY23–24, Voices for Children facilitated trainings on implicit bias & privilege for CASAs; filmed an educational video discussion with CASAs on the subject of LGBTQ+ advocacy as a Continuing Education resource; continued to ensure all our internal and external communications use inclusive and affirming language; held six bi-monthly staff DEI trainings that incorporated key topics such as: generational trauma, overcoming adverse childhood experiences (ACES), building resilience, and understanding the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) when working with Native American families and tribes.

We also changed our CASA small group session offerings to include more diverse topics that better represent the youth we serve.

This past year, Voices for Children again participated in the Human Rights Campaign Foundation’s All Children–All Families program. This program is designed to enhance the services child welfare agencies provide to the LGBTQ+ community, including children in foster care. We are proud to have earned the Innovative Inclusion Tier of Recognition, the highest level of recognition, for our efforts to support LGBTQ+ youth and families. This recognition is a testament to our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Now in its fourth year, our staff-led Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Awareness, and Action (IDEAA) Council supports essential advances in our DEI efforts.





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CASA Laura helped me find what worked for me, which I think every CASA can do for their youth, whether it's sports or any hobby because you won't be there for the entire child's life, but if you can plant those seeds or help them plant their own, it goes a lot further than one or two resources you can provide at the moment. Being a CASA is just as much an experience for the youth in foster care as it is for the volunteer. This is an opportunity to make the world a better place by making an impact in a child's life.”

*- VANESSA, UCLA CLASS OF 2024,
B.A. IN SOCIOLOGY, REAL WORD PANELIST*

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

FY2022-2023 & FY2023-2024

REVENUES	FY2022-2023	FY2023-2024
Gifts and Contributions	\$3,220,756	\$3,599,145
Special Events (less direct benefits)	\$2,212,402	\$2,280,579
Government Funding	\$2,562,488	\$3,223,087
Contributed Goods, Services, and Facilities	\$62,607	\$65,297
Investment Return	\$220,606	\$543,426
Total Revenue	\$8,278,859	\$9,711,534
EXPENSES	FY2022-2023	FY2023-2024
Program	\$5,783,261	\$6,405,437
Management and General	\$625,292	\$780,847
Fundraising	\$1,370,658	\$1,492,690
Total Expenses	\$7,779,211	\$8,678,974
Change in Net Assets	\$499,648	\$1,032,560
Net Assets at the Beginning of Year	\$11,145,356	\$11,645,004
Net Assets at Year End	\$11,645,004	\$12,677,564



- GIFTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS **37.06%**
- SPECIAL EVENTS **23.48%**
- GOVERNMENT FUNDING **33.19%**
- CONTRIBUTED GOODS, SERVICES, AND FACILITIES **0.67%**
- INVESTMENT RETURN **5.60%**



- PROGRAM **73.80%**
- MANAGEMENT AND GENERAL **9.00%**
- FUNDRAISING **17.20%**

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

FY2022-2023 & FY2023-2024

ASSETS	FY2022-2023	FY2023-2024
Current Assets	\$11,579,990	\$13,550,270
Property and Equipment	\$197,471	\$385,504
Other Assets	\$3,169,054	\$2,575,433
Total Assets	\$14,946,515	\$16,511,207
LIABILITY AND NET ASSETS	FY2022-2023	FY2023-2024
Current Liabilities	\$1,728,661	\$2,264,417
Long-term Liabilities	\$1,572,850	\$1,569,226
Net Assets – Without Donor Restrictions	\$9,329,741	\$10,930,133
Net Assets – With Donor Restrictions	\$2,315,263	\$1,747,431
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$14,946,515	\$16,511,207



Your Support Gives Children a Voice

During FY23-24, Voices for Children received generous financial support totaling **\$9,711,534**. Because of you, we provided one-on-one advocacy to more than 2,300 children living in foster care across San Diego and Riverside Counties.

GIFTS, GRANTS, & CONTRIBUTIONS

Voices for Children is funded primarily by support from individuals, private foundations, businesses, and service groups who believe in our mission and join us in investing in our community's children. We are grateful for their contributions, which impact thousands of lives and will continue to make a difference for years to come.

Additionally, we apply and compete for government grants to recruit, train, and support CASAs for children in San Diego and Riverside Counties. We are grateful to receive support from the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services through the U.S. Department of Justice, Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), along with various Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), and other grants awarded by our state, county, and city jurisdictions.

We invite you to review the San Diego and Riverside County supplements to this report, which include donor listings showcasing the broad community support for local children in foster care through the exceptional advocacy of our CASAs.

BY THE NUMBERS:

- **1,222** CASA volunteers
- **99,000+** hours donated
- **\$3.8 million+** in donated time*
- **\$65,297** in-kind donations of media, special activities for children, development opportunities for staff, and professional services

*According to the *Independent Sector*, volunteer time in California is valued at \$38.61 per hour.



Proud recipient of the 2024 GuideStar Platinum Seal of Transparency and a four-star Charity Navigator rating.

Leadership

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FY2023-2024

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President & CEO

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL RIVERSIDE COUNTY

FY2023-2024

Liz Jones
Jim Steere
Hector Zatarain



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It's essential to provide young boys in foster care the opportunity to lean on and learn from stable male role models. I encourage men to take action by offering a few hours a month to make a difference for boys living in foster care in our local community. The little time spent as a CASA may be all it takes to have a life-changing effect.”

– CASA ROBERT, RIVERSIDE COUNTY



Voices for Children adheres to the "Trauma-Informed Care Code of Conduct" developed by San Diego Foundation, Clinton Foundation, and the County of San Diego.



speakupnow.org

858-569-2019 | San Diego County

951-472-9301 | Riverside County

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