

An Act of Advocacy, a Life Saved

Within the foster care system, countless youth face challenges that extend beyond placement instability, often enduring unmet needs that go unnoticed or unaddressed. A Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) plays a critical role in bridging that gap by listening closely, advocating fiercely, and ensuring that each young person's well-being is prioritized.

In September 2024, Susie was sworn in as a CASA and assigned her very first case, a teenage youth "Lexi", who was placed in a group home in San Diego County. Although new to the role, CASA Susie brought a deep commitment to her advocacy and began spending time with Lexi. CASA Susie built trust through consistent visits and meaningful conversations. Over time, Lexi would confide that she often didn't feel well physically. CASA Susie immediately raised concerns with the group home staff, but her observations were repeatedly dismissed.

Everything changed in early 2025 when CASA Susie was notified that Lexi had been hospitalized. She rushed to the hospital with a court order in hand to speak with doctors and understand the severity of the situation. At the same time, she contacted both the social worker and Lexi's attorney, neither of whom had been informed of the hospitalization by the group home. Both were deeply concerned and grateful for CASA Susie's outreach.

From that moment on, CASA Susie remained by Lexi's side. She communicated daily with the medical team and visited almost every day. Just days after Lexi was admitted to the hospital, her case was scheduled for a hearing. At the hearing, CASA Susie provided a detailed update on Lexi's medical condition. During the hearing, Lexi's attorney publicly acknowledged the critical role CASA Susie had played. She stated that without CASA Susie's attention to Lexi's symptoms and her swift action, Lexi's condition might have gone undiagnosed, with potentially devastating consequences.



Lexi's attorney noted that despite her frequent complaints of stomach pain, which were often managed with over-the-counter remedies, no one had previously suspected a severe underlying condition. Lexi had never trusted anyone enough to disclose the full extent of her health issues. CASA Susie's genuine connection and persistent advocacy created the safe space Lexi needed to open up, which led to a medical evaluation that revealed a rare, severe disorder. Lexi's attorney praised Susie's empathetic, unwavering dedication and acknowledged that she had never witnessed such a strong bond between a CASA and a youth before.

Because of CASA Susie, Lexi is now receiving the lifesaving care she urgently needed.

CASA Susie's commitment to listening without dismissal and advocating relentlessly highlights the vital role CASAs play in ensuring that the medical needs of youth in foster care are recognized and addressed. When concerns are overlooked or minimized, the consequences can be life-threatening. By acting as a vital link between the child, healthcare providers, social workers, and the court, CASAs help secure the care that supports immediate health and long-term success.

Names and identifying details have been changed to protect confidentiality