



CASA
of Monterey County
COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES
FOR CHILDREN

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MEDIA RELEASE

During Pandemic, Local Volunteers Work to Ensure At-Risk Children are Safe: Volunteers Needed Now More than Ever

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April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. Sadly, child abuse and neglect are expected to rise in the face of this pandemic, as families are under more financial and emotional stress. Children are no longer in the public eye—they are not at schools or daycare, or in other locations where caring individuals would be able to spot signs of abuse or neglect. One group of volunteers in Monterey County is working hard to ensure that abuse and neglect do not go unnoticed.

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) are community members who volunteer with CASA of Monterey County. CASAs work with and advocate for children in the child welfare system who have already experienced abuse or neglect. They meet with children and provide information to judges that helps the judges make the most well-informed decisions about each child.

CASA visits provide an opportunity for CASA volunteers to check in on the foster children's safety and well-being. Due to COVID-19, meeting in person with the children they advocate for has been temporarily halted. Not seeing a child face-to-face makes it more challenging for the CASAs to gauge what is going on in children's lives, and their needs. This has resulted in CASA volunteers working with program staff to find creative ways to continue to meet with their children such as virtually, via telephone calls, letters, notes, texting, etc.

“Providing this kind of stability, regardless of what is happening in the world, is making a real difference in children's lives,” said Executive Director Vicki Myers. “We need volunteers now more than ever and are encouraging all community members to join with us either by volunteering or by helping us ensure children are safe during this time of crisis.”

If readers suspect a child is in immediate danger, they should contact the police or call 9-1-1. They can also contact the Child Help National Child Abuse Hotline via text, phone or online chat (<https://www.childhelp.org/childhelp-hotline/>), to report abuse.

To learn more about becoming a CASA of Monterey County volunteer, or to register for an online information session, visit <https://www.casaofmonterey.org>

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For Immediate Release