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SHARE JOY
GIVE THE GIFT
OF HOPE TO AN
ABUSED CHILD

the
CASA

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TREE**

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FOR CHILDREN
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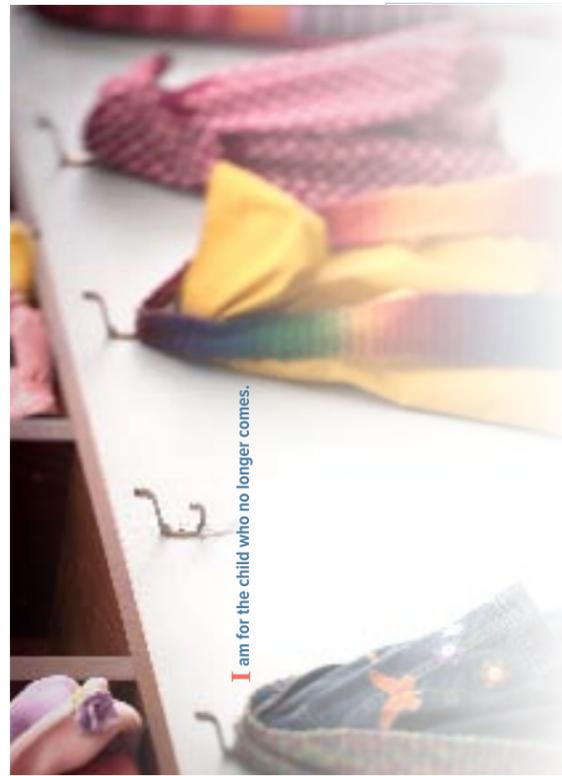
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CASA OF JACKSON COUNTY, INC.
613 MARKET STREET, MEDFORD, OREGON 97504
541-734-2272



New CASA Advocates

SWORN IN APRIL 29, 2016



Jessica Winney, Elizabeth Peard, Paula Wilson, Dennis Haley, The Honorable Patricia Crain, Don Kruger, Cindy Massei, Mags Graham, Deirdre Barber, Marta Wittnebel, Jan Gardner, John Lamm, Mary Jenny-Saltmarsh, Mark Fuerstenberg

SWORN IN JULY 29, 2016



Darlene Pope, Tracey Parks, Aileen Brockbank, Kelly Hammond, Elizabeth Rowley, Michael Moore, The Honorable Lisa Greif, Michael Love, Debbie Talbott, Laura Wilson, Debbie Ogden, Donna Johnson, Mary Wittenberg, Carol Page, Wenonaa Spivak

"We often say that we are doing CASA work to give back, when in fact it is a journey in both directions as we grow more deeply inside and fill up our well of reserves in the same proportion and degree as our CASA kiddos make progress in their lives."

~ CASA Ken



Jennifer Mylenek
Executive Director

COMMUNITY HOPE

CASA is bursting at the seams. This is all at once good and bad. Bad because there are a landmark number of children entering child welfare in our county; good because there have been a record number of people coming into the CASA fold to help these children find safety and permanency. However, with the number of people answering the call of action to become CASAs we find ourselves out of space in our building. Not to mention, we have to find a way to increase our CASA advocates by 100 over the next few years so that no child falls between the cracks.

As we consider potential options for a larger space we have twice reorganized and streamlined our current space so that we can provide the best possible service to our clients and CASAs. I want to take the opportunity to give recognition to the CASA

staff for being creative and collaborative in order to continue taking on high priority cases despite not having needed space.

Please keep CASA in your thoughts as we look for a larger location near to Child Welfare or the Courts and the funds to support the right move. Thank you for being a supporter, volunteer, ambassador, and/or just holding CASA in your hearts.

J Mylenek

Jennifer Mylenek
Executive Director and Child Advocate

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Jennifer Mylenek, *Executive Director*

I AM THE CHILD'S VOICE IN COURT

Having decided upon an early retirement after relocating to Ashland, Oregon, I decided that I had much more to give - time, energy, and a desire to help others. I researched volunteer opportunities online and Volunteermatch.org popped up. After completing their interest queries, a match came up: CASA of Jackson County. What were my interests? A strong desire to help those who cannot help, or speak for, themselves: children and/or animals. I was drawn to CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) for abused or neglected children as an outlet for my desire to volunteer.



CASAs represent the child's voice in court, gathering information about the case by meeting with the child(ren) and all relevant adults (teachers, parents, foster parents, physicians). CASAs identify the child(ren)'s needs and make recommendations to the court judge. We advocate for the child's placement and ongoing care in a safe, permanent, and nurturing home, as well as recommend programs, whether it is an educational plan or medical care. We work with the DHS caseworker in order to coordinate care and placement. It is quite a substantive and positive role for someone to play in a child's life.

In order to become a CASA, I was required to complete 40 hours of training and was sworn in by a judge after a rigorous background check. It doesn't necessarily require a tremendous amount of time in order to make a difference - many CASAs are working full-time and there are many husband and wife "teams." In any event, I immediately decided to take on 2 cases. I was apprehensive at first. Would I ask the wrong question? Would the children be able to relate to me? Would the parents/foster parents welcome my assistance? Although my training was outstanding, I'd never been placed in a situation or role so important, and was quite anxious. However, I found that I was quickly able to establish a rapport with my children and families. These children have seen or experienced violence or neglect and I found that simply coordinating medical care or just spending time with them has made a tremendous impact. I've had so much fun with my kids, riding bikes, going for walks, teaching them how to swim, or just having epic water balloon fights. I believe these memories of someone caring for, and about, them will endure. Beyond the fun, there are serious issues to address, whether they be coordinating supervised contact with an incarcerated parent, safety plans, educational plans with teachers, or addressing health problems. For instance, one of my CASA kids has multiple health issues that had not been addressed. I was able to research the history of the issues, previous treatment, and coordinate the appropriate surgeries. I have been able to attend these appointments and ensure that treatment was appropriate. In addition, basic nutrition and healthy eating were introduced, and along with those bike rides and walks, is resulting in a healthier child.

I've had so much fun attending school functions, playing video games, and spending time with my kids that it's hard to believe that it's volunteering for a higher purpose. However, it is just that - being a CASA is such an important role for these children who have been abused/neglected. As a CASA, I frequently appear in court to speak on behalf of my children. CASAs of Jackson County enjoy an outstanding reputation and the judges respect our opinions and advice. A stellar administrative team supports us, including a peer support program, and my time spent as a CASA is insignificant compared to the tremendous positive impact upon these children.

I am struck by the reality that these children were simply born into, or raised in, circumstances that were completely beyond their control. Through no fault of their own, they find themselves at risk, having been neglected, abandoned, physically or emotionally abused. They are paying the price for someone else's choices. Their needs are great. As the late great Muhammad Ali said, "Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on Earth." Volunteermatch.org paired me with this wonderful organization - being a CASA and helping these children is so gratifying and influential that I feel like I've paid rent on a penthouse!

- CASA Susan

I AM FOR THE CHILD LUNCHEON

Save the Date!



January 18, 2017

12:00 - 1:30 p.m.

at the Rogue Valley Country Club

To sponsor a table, please contact:
Erin Carpenter at 541-734-2272,
ecarpenter@jacksoncountycasa.org

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ADVOCATE FOR A CHILD TODAY!

"I had a great childhood. That's a chapter in our lives we only get one of. You only get one chance to be a kid."
~ CASA Mike Feeley



SIGN UP TODAY! NEXT TRAINING BEGINS JANUARY 2017

Volunteer orientations are offered every Thursday from 12:00 - 1:00pm.

CASA of Jackson County | 541-734-2272 | www.casaofjacksoncounty.org



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