

Non Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 84
Medford, OR



CASA OF JACKSON COUNTY, INC.
409 N. Front Street
Medford, Oregon 97501



According to research, acts of kindness release the same chemicals as falling in love: dopamine, oxytocin, and serotonin. When you're feeling low, instead of turning away from the world, find one small way be of service. Kindness heals us all.



LOVE IS WHAT MAKES A FAMILY

ALLY'S STORY



My name is Ally. Although on my original birth certificate, it shows a different name. Up until I was nine, I was known as Raechel. I was given the opportunity to change my name because while growing up, meth was always present in my household. To this day, I can still remember the ingredients that can be used to create meth. While living with my biological parents, I attended almost every elementary school in Medford, and lived in every hotel and motel on Riverside Avenue. Moving from place to place became my life. Until I was nine, that's all I had known.

Throughout my eight years in foster care, I had been placed in seven homes. In 2005, I met the two most important people in my life, and to this day, almost 11 years later, I call them my Mom and Dad. It was with them, that I had been introduced to the CASA program. Before I was given a CASA, I had no prior knowledge of what this program was, or how much of an impact they would have on me. My CASAs, Kathy and John, became such a huge part of my life in such a short amount of time. They had been there for me when I wasn't sure that I even needed someone. They were the two people in my life that for once, I didn't have to tell my story to, because they already knew. Back then, I didn't know I would refer to my life with my parents as a "story", one with a beginning and an end. I also never would have thought telling this story, my life, to all of you, would ever be a good thing.



After a short period of time getting to know my CASAs and my new foster family, my brother, sister and I were given the opportunity to be adopted to what everyone, even ourselves, thought was a suitable family in Ohio. CASA and my foster family put together a goodbye ceremony. We sat around a table, ate cake and laughed at all the memories we had made together, until it was time to say goodbye. With all of our things packed, we flew to a state, a town, a house, we didn't know. When I think back to living in Ohio, I remember it as though I had dreamt it. It was like we fit into their family, opposed to all the other families that only felt temporary. Then one morning, three months later, our bags were packed again and I remember thinking to myself, "I hadn't known there was a return policy on kids."

Moving back to Oregon wasn't the hard part. The hard part was the idea that we had moved hundreds of miles away for these people with the mindset that it was forever. Being surrounded by familiar faces, like my CASAs and my past foster family made it easier. For a couple of months all of us were hurt. After a year, something exciting happened. On April 17, 2007, we were adopted by our foster family. I remember our parents sitting us down at the kitchen table and asking if being adopted into their family would be something we would want. Of course we said yes. I have a list of the best days of my life. Being adopted is at the top of the list, right next to my sister having a baby. When we were adopted we lost contact with our CASAs for a little while, but when my sister was a freshman in high school, she recognized the attendance lady. The attendance lady was CASA Kathy. Working with the CASA program and all the people that are trying to help kids just like me, is the most incredible experience I have had. Now that I am older, I understand how much they helped shape the person I am today.

CASA'S ANNUAL I AM FOR THE CHILD LUNCHEON

January 21, 2026

12:00 - 1:00 p.m.

at the Rogue Valley Country Club
2660 Hillcrest Rd, Medford, Oregon



SPONSORSHIP LEVELS

Presenting Sponsor ~ \$5,000
Platinum Sponsor ~ \$2,500
Gold Sponsor ~ \$1,000
Table Sponsor ~ \$500

For reservations or to sponsor,
541-734-2272 | ecarpenter@jacksoncountycasa.org

HYUNDAI MEDFORD

During the month of November, Hyundai Medford will donate \$100 to CASA for every car sold. A heartfelt thank you from all of us at CASA, for this partnership, giving local children hope, safety, stability and the chance to simply be a kid again.



COMMUNITY HOPE



Jennifer Mylenek
Executive Director

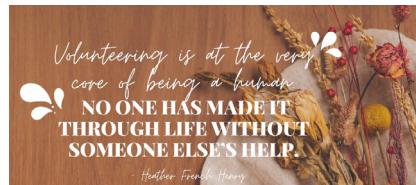
CASAs (Court Appointed Special Advocates) provide critical advocacy for children who have experienced abuse or neglect. They stand beside children in the courtroom, at school, and with medical providers—often serving as the one consistent adult in a child's life during uncertain times. This trusted role allows CASAs to identify each child's unique needs and ensure those needs are met.

CASA of Jackson County is always working to close gaps in the systems that serve children. Our newest initiative focuses on addressing opioid and substance use prevention among youth through CASA advocacy. By developing specialized training for CASAs, we aim to better support youth at risk and build a model that can be expanded throughout Oregon.

This vital work is only possible thanks to our more than 250 volunteer CASAs, foundation grants, and community support. Whether you are a volunteer, board member, funder, or advocate—thank you. Your commitment helps change the trajectory of a child's life.

J Mylenek

Jennifer Mylenek,
Executive Director and Child Advocate



CASA volunteers frequently are the voice of the child in the courtroom. I cannot overemphasize how valuable CASA volunteers are to the process. They provide encouragement to struggling parents and a sense of worth to the children they represent. CASA volunteers also help ensure that the judges receive valuable information to make decisions about the children. I do not believe I can adequately express my belief in the value of CASA volunteers to the system and to the positive outcomes I see in families. I know that having a CASA volunteer helps a child have a better outcome in the juvenile system. The financial value of a CASA volunteer is measurable. Repairing families and reducing the numbers of children in foster care greatly decreases the downstream costs to our community by helping break the school to prison pipeline, reducing crime, decreasing emergency room visits, and keeping our community safer. The moral value of a CASA volunteer is immeasurable. There is nothing more satisfying as a judge than watching parents overcome their addictions and be able to safely raise their children. Knowing that we have helped end the cycle of abuse or neglect is priceless. CASA volunteers are a key part of the process, and I wish every child could have one.

I firmly believe having a CASA volunteer has a direct correlation to improving the outcomes for children and their parents in the dependency system.

Benjamin M. Bloom
Presiding Judge, Jackson County Circuit Court

Board of Directors

Jim Wright, *President*
Kyle Pace, *Vice President*
Amy Zarosinski, *Treasurer*
Shirley Johnson, *Secretary*
John Watt, *Immediate Past President*
Shane Antholz
Daniel Delgado



Amy Di Costanzo
Dave Dotterer
Vicki Forehand
Dann Hauser
Mandy Hurley
Bruce Laidlaw
Jennifer Mylenek, *Executive Director*

CASA Staff

Jennifer Mylenek, *Executive Director*
Cristina Petrone, *Program Director*
Erin Carpenter, *Development & Media Manager*
Cheryl Noles, *Administrative Coordinator*
Lena Anderson, *Case Supervisor*

Jacquelyn Cordero, *Case Supervisor*
Becky Jones, *Case Supervisor*
Melissa Olson, *Case Supervisor*
Nef Rangel, *Case Supervisor*
Caitlin Stainbrook, *Data Specialist*

HOPE FOR THE HOLIDAYS



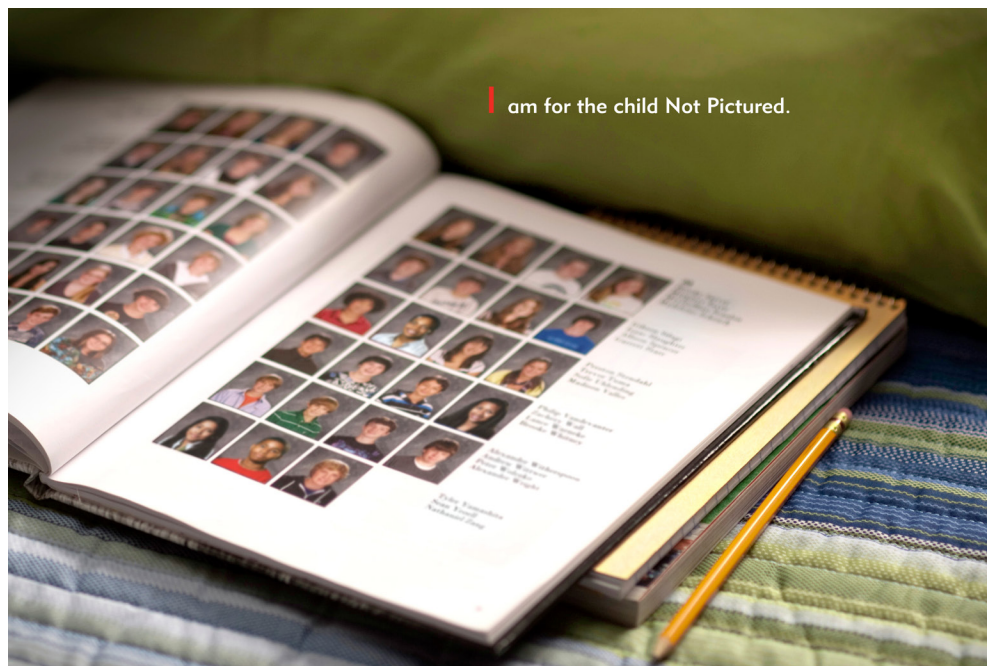
As Christmas approached, this resource mom had each child make a Christmas wish list, with the understanding that Santa would pick one item from each child's list. At that point, Hope for the Holidays stepped in. This struggling family was nominated by CASA for the Rogue Valley Time's Hope for the Holidays series. When the community read the story, they stepped up. Not only did each child receive everything they had wished for, there were donations of grocery gift cards and financial donations toward living expenses. In addition, the children received an elaborate outdoor play structure that would spark their imaginations and provide hours of healthy outdoor play. Despite all these children had been through, our community made sure it was a Christmas to remember.

From the Board, Staff, Volunteers and especially the Co-CASA Team assigned to this case...

Thank you!



It is an all-too common story in Jackson County. Four children, ages two to eight, are removed from their single mother's care because of her habitual substance abuse and placed in relative resource care. Their resource mom, a young woman in her early twenties, must assume this responsibility for the children she has known since their births and put her education goals on hold.



A CASA volunteer plays an extraordinary and transformative role in the lives of children who witness domestic violence. In these cases, our CASAs become a safe, caring presence who listens without judgment, validating the experiences of these vulnerable children. Domestic violence is often cloaked in a culture of silence, entangled with shame, guilt, and self-blame. Our CASAs help break through this silence, offering children someone they can trust, respect, and rely on to see their worth and value when they might not see it in themselves.

What makes the CASA role truly unique is the unwavering commitment to the child's best interest—a vision that stands above all else. Our volunteers are the one steady, devoted advocate in the child's life, always present to ensure they receive the support and stability they deserve. With a CASA by their side, children facing these challenges have a compassionate guide to help them navigate their journey with strength and resilience.

CASA GIVING TREES



Each year the CASA Giving Tree campaign is a special way for the community to participate by donating new toys, clothing, and gift cards to vulnerable children who are living in foster or relative care during the holiday season.

These children have been removed from their homes and families due to abuse and/or neglect. This is an opportunity for CASA, the community and the trained volunteers who advocate for these children to ensure they have a holiday season filled with love, hope and joy.

A sincere thank you to our **CASA Giving Tree sponsor, Lithia 4Kids**- a partnership we value as we work together to support the children in our community.

Together, Lithia 4Kids, our many tree locations, individual family sponsors, special toy drives and community members helped over 516 children last year.

Tree locations will be listed at www.jacksoncountycasa.org

An Amazon wishlist is available for those who prefer to shop from home.

Donations toward gifts for CASA children may be mailed or completed online.

Specialty Gifts!

New this year, we are looking for groups, businesses or individuals willing to focus on creating special gifts for CASA teens. A coffee tumbler with coffee gift cards, movie buckets with popcorn, candy and a Tinseltown gift card, a gift box full of art supplies, etc.

CASAs so appreciate having these thoughtful, packaged gifts for teenagers!

If you would like to host a tree location, sponsor a CASA family, or be creative with specialty gifts,

please contact Erin Carpenter: ecarpenter@jacksoncountycasa.org

