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# ADVOCATE ALLEY

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Volume 4, Issue 1

January 2010

Cheers to a new year and another chance for us to get it right. -Oprah Winfrey

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Dear Advocates,

I hope 2010 has been treating you all wonderfully well thus far. It was a treat to see so many of you in the CASA office during the Gift of Giving event. We thank all of you that make the extra effort to get your CASA child to the office so they could all experience the gift of giving to others. It was touching for all of us to be able to observe the joy and excitement.

In keeping with this spirit of giving, we have six boxes of books that have been donated by the Toro Park School. There are a wide variety of books for children of all ages. You are all encouraged to come in this week and take a few for your CASA child(ren)! We are out of storage space in the activity room, so we will distribute the overflow to other agencies beginning next week.

Also, many of you have probably already seen the Disney Give a Day Get a Day commercials. CASA of Monterey County is a registered participant, meaning that if you sign up through them, you can earn a free ticket to a Disneyland park. How awesome is that? You can visit the website and learn more here: <http://home.disney.go.com/parks/>

We hope to see as many of you as can make it to the Advocate Appreciation Party at the end of the month. Please note the date, time and location below. The staff has prepared a special surprise for those of you in attendance... an event you surely do not want to miss!

With gratitude,

Michelle Arnold  
Program Manager

**SAVE THE DATE!!!**  
**Annual Advocate Appreciation Party**  
**Hyatt Regency Monterey**  
**Fireside Lounge**  
**January 26<sup>th</sup> 4:30pm to 7:00pm**

## Become a group home liaison!

How many of us have been confused by the structure of a group home where our CASA child has been placed? Could communication have been better between you and the staff? Did you feel that the youth lacked a clear understanding of house expectations? Our pilot program is off the ground, and we're looking for a few fabulous advocates who are up to the challenge of this exciting new role. Contact Michelle to learn more!

## Increase Your Credit Score!

Here is a fairly painless opportunity to increase your continuing education credit score from the comfort of your own home! If your credit score is down, here is a great opportunity to catch up. If you want to put advanced credit on the CASA books so you won't be rushing to catch up in July, here's an opportunity to get ahead.

\*\*Remember that you need to earn at least 1 credit per month or 12 credits between September 1 and August 31.\*\*

Here's how it works...

1. Tune into PBS **tonight (1/5) at 9pm** to watch This Emotional Life: Part 2 of 3. An examination of the negative emotions of anger, fear, anxiety and despair, including why we have them and how they can spiral out of control. Case studies include a woman whose temper is threatening her relationships; a college student with a fear of flying; a clinically depressed teenager; veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder.

**and/or Wednesday (1/6) at 9pm:** Conclusion. A look at happiness, what it is and how to attain it, featuring the stories of people facing major events in their lives, including a cancer diagnosis and the death of a child. Also: why people often are wrong about will bring them happiness; what research has to say about activities and qualities that foster happiness; the role that friends, family and the wider community play in one's happiness.

**and/or Saturday (1/9) 5pm and Sunday (1/10) 4pm:** Psychologist Daniel Gilbert ("Stumbling on Happiness") hosts this three-part look at the emotional side of life, beginning with the role that relationships play in emotional health. It details the cognitive and neurological processes of everyday interactions, features comments from celebrities and shares the real-life stories of a boy adopted from a Russian orphanage, parents of newborn twins, a couple in marriage counseling, a bullied teenager and two women grappling with workplace stress.

2. For each hour you watch you earn 1 continuing education credit.
3. Send an email to Michelle at [michelle@casamonterey.org](mailto:michelle@casamonterey.org) and let us know how many hours you watched.
4. We will increase your continuing education credit score!

For more information log on to: <http://www.pbs.org/thisemotionallife/topics>. Confirm viewing times in your area at [www.tvguide.com](http://www.tvguide.com).

## Advocate Avenue



We would like to wish the following advocates a very happy birthday during the month of January...

James Weinstein	1/1
Lisa Crawley	1/2
Don Manzagol	1/2
Dan O'Brien	1/3
Mercy Galarza	1/7
Alyca Tanner	1/8
Rick Baldwin	1/10
Michelle Burnett	1/10
Susan Gardner	1/13
Ilene Listrom	1/13
Julie Bryan	1/15
Anissa Ferraro	1/15
Mary Russell	1/17
Denise Danaher	1/18
Catherine Winter	1/22
Robert McDowell	1/23
Betsy Sunukjian	1/25
Marvel Howarth	1/27

## Together with Love: Free and Fun for CASA Kids 10 and Under!

The Big Sur Marathon has graciously offered to pay any registration fees of any children 10 and under that are associated with CASA. This Annual Kids run is 1K and starts at Lovers Point in Pacific Grove on Valentine's Day. Because Big Sur is donating the registration fee we have special collection procedures, ONLY for CASA kids. We will collect the completed registration forms at the CASA office and send them to the Rape Crisis Center directly or you can hand them in the day of the race. On the day of the race, the children will receive a t-shirt, a goody bag, and a gold medal as they cross the line. The registration form can be found on the next page. Sounds like a lot of fun! Thanks to Mercy Galarza for making this special partnership happen!

6th ANNUAL  
 "TOGETHER WITH LOVE"  
 1K KIDS' FUN RUN  
 For kids 10 and under  
 A benefit for the Monterey County Rape Crisis Center



Sunday, February 14, 2010  
 Lover's Point Park, Pacific Grove  
 Race starts at 8:15 am

Ribbon & Goodie Bag for all participants  
 \$12 /child before 1/31/10 and \$15 /child after 1/31/10 and on race day

Complete registration form and mail with parent signature, self addressed  
 stamped envelope and check payable to  
 MCRCC, P.O.Box 2630, Monterey, CA 93942  
 or register at [www.mtryrapecrisis.org](http://www.mtryrapecrisis.org) click on race icon

TOGETHER WITH LOVE Call 373-3955 for more information.

SEX  M  F DATE OF BIRTH    -   -   AGE

LAST NAME           FIRST

ADDRESS

CITY           STATE   ZIP

Pairs Combined Age:   T-Shirt:  S  M  L  XL PHONE

WAIVER: In consideration of your accepting this entry, I, intending to be legally bound, do hereby, myself and my heirs, executors, administrators waive and release any and all rights and claims or damages I may incur against the parents and organizers affiliated with this race for or in and or injuries that may be sustained by me or anyone to or from this event. I am participating in this competition in my physical condition verified by a licensed M.D. during the 60 days prior to the race. As part of this waiver, I acknowledge that I have read and understand all of the above.

ALL ENTRANTS MUST SIGN WAIVER. (Parent/Guardian if under 18) \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Providing Effective Financial Aid Assistance to Students from Foster Care and Unaccompanied Homeless Youth**

This publication is now available free in PDF and hardcopy through:

<http://casey.org/Resources/Publications/pdf/ProvidingEffectiveFinancialAid.pdf>

and

<http://casey.org/Resources/Publications/ProvidingEffectiveFinancialAid.htm>

This publication is the first to be endorsed by eleven higher education professional organizations (see back cover page) after being developed by the California Community College Chancellor's Office, Tracy Fried and Associates, NASFAA, NAEHCY, Casey Family Programs. This guide provides important information for anyone who helps youth from foster care and unaccompanied homeless youth complete their FAFSA which now has new questions (55-60) pertaining to students in or from foster care and unaccompanied homeless youth. The guide:

- Aims to secure financial aid for students in postsecondary education or training programs
- Describes how to respond to new FAFSA questions 55-60 that will determine federal financial aid status for these students
- Includes a section on sensitive communications from the student perspective

This guide will be most useful for financial aid professionals, independent living coordinators, guidance counselors, financial aid counselors, ETV staff, social workers and advocates who are helping youth to secure the maximum allowable financial aid. With the 2010 FAFSA application season starting in January, it will be important to offer students assistance with the new questions 55-60 if they are to qualify for maximum financial aid awards. We are confident you and your colleagues will find this guide an important tool in your work with students. Please forward this message on to others.

## **Advocacy in the Context of Permanence:**

“In all of us there is a hunger, marrow-deep, to know our heritage—to know who we are and where we have come from. Without this enriching knowledge, there is a hollow yearning. No matter what our attainments in life, there is still ... an emptiness, and the most disquieting loneliness.” Alex Haley, Roots

This quote helps us understand the vital importance of permanency and family connections for children in the foster care system. Child advocacy is an essential element in successful permanency planning. Studies consistently show that children with CASAs are more likely to receive necessary and appropriate services, more likely to be adopted, and less likely to re-enter the foster care system after they leave. By attending to the important aspects of a child's world, the advocate shows the child that adults can treat children with respect, kindness, and care. Family Finding and Engagement includes extensive efforts by the team to identify, search for, and locate the available adult relatives who might be a permanent, lifelong, connection for a child. The engagement process includes assessing their response to being contacted and determining what services they may need to provide a safe, loving and permanent connection or home for their family's lost child. A complete search also includes locating every sibling of the child, and supporting family connections for all.

CASA of Monterey County is committed to working with system partners to facilitate Family Finding and Engagement and is developing a comprehensive program of support for our advocates to conduct this work. If you would like to participate in workshops to train in techniques for Family Finding and Engagement, please contact Siobhan by email at [siobhan@casamonterey.org](mailto:siobhan@casamonterey.org).

## PERMANENCY

# Love and belonging. For a lifetime.

### WHO ..... **Every child.**

- 👤 Every child needs and deserves to feel love, a sense of belonging, and have the continuity of family and loved ones to support and guide them in their lives.
- 👤 California's 70,000 foster children especially need permanency, given the trauma they experience when they are separated from their families and removed from their homes — an experience that most of us cannot even imagine.

### WHAT..... **Love and belonging. For a lifetime.**

- 👤 Too many of our foster children live in uncertainty, unsure of what is happening to them, and who is committed to them for a lifetime. Separated from their parents, siblings and tribes, they live in a succession of foster or group homes and lose the continuity of friends, family, school and community.
- 👤 There are three paths to legal permanency (reunification with a child's family, adoption or guardianship). A youth also can find permanency through a lifelong commitment from a caring adult or family (known as "emotional" or "relational" permanency).

### WHY..... **A better life.**

- 👤 Helping foster children find permanency in their lives enables them to be connected with others, to know unconditional love and support, and to develop a crucial sense of identity. This helps them to grow into healthy, happy and productive adults.
- 👤 Without permanency, foster children are largely on their own at 18 or 19 when they "age out" of the foster care system. Without family and any sort of a "safety net," they face daunting odds — many end up unemployed, homeless or in jail.

### WHERE..... **In a family.**

- 👤 Permanency means strengthening families to keep their children safely at home whenever it is possible to do so.
- 👤 Families come in all shapes and sizes — Permanency often means we rethink standard definitions of "family" and focus more on the relationships that youth need to feel loved and supported.
- 👤 If children do enter foster care, permanency efforts keep them connected to their families. By locating extended family members and other loved ones, we can reduce the time children spend in care.

### WHEN..... **Now!**

- 👤 Permanency is urgent and achievable for every child and youth in foster care. Every day a youth is not in a family is a day too long.
- 👤 When foster children have permanency, they are able to exit the foster care system with the security of a family, resulting in significant savings to the state and counties.
- 👤 Let's build on California's progress — and our momentum — in improving efforts to find permanency for our foster children and youth.

### HOW..... **Together.**

- 👤 Everyone has an important role to play — It takes teamwork by families, caregivers and professionals — with the child or youth at the center of the process — to find and support permanency.
- 👤 We know what we need to do and how to do it — Through coordinated state and local leadership, we can unite our efforts and combine our resources to ensure a lifetime of love and belonging for every foster child and youth in California.



California Child Welfare  
Co-Investment Partnership

Administrative Office of the Courts | California Department of Social Services | County  
Welfare Directors Association | Annie E. Casey Foundation | Casey Family Programs | Stuart  
Foundation | Walter S. Johnson Foundation | Zellerbach Family Foundation

To receive updated information and publications from the California Child Welfare Co-Investment Partnership, sign up for our listServ at [www.co-invest.org](http://www.co-invest.org).