
ADVOCATE ALLEY

Volume 4, Issue 3

March 2010

Never iron a four-leaf clover, because you don't want to press your luck. -Author Unknown

Dear Advocates,

Thank you so much to all of you that made this year's Lighting the Way fundraiser a huge success! We are still tallying numbers, but it is safe to say that we were wonderfully supported by many amazing members of our community. This support will enable us to grow the CASA program, allowing for more advocates, more children served and better support and opportunities for all of you. For this, we are filled with gratitude.

Please take a moment to view the table below for information on our Continuing Education offerings for the month of March. Our first meeting of the CASA Film Club went wonderfully last month, and we look forward to seeing more of you join us this month. Please note that the CASA Film Club meets at the Carmel Youth Center (not the CASA office) on the first Thursday of every month. Also, Jan Tice will be joining us from Santa Cruz County on March 10th for a highly informative class on substance abuse. This class is relevant to the vast majority of our CASA cases, so we hope many of you will be able to attend.

Please remember that each advocate is responsible for earning a minimum of 12 hours per year (ending on August 31). If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact your supervisor or me directly.

MAR	4th	Film Night- White Oleander	CASA Film Club	6pm to 9pm
	10th	Substance Abuse- From Understanding to Action	Jan Tice	6pm to 8pm
	24th	Peer Review	CASA Staff	6pm to 8pm

I have included a flyer regarding Independent City toward the end of the newsletter. If your CASA child is 15 ½ or older, please take the time to read this information and confirm with the child's social worker that they have RSVPed to attend. This event is highly educational, beneficial and fun, and your CASA child will walk away with lots of great new knowledge and an armful of useful goodies.

With gratitude,
Michelle Arnold
Program Manager

Saturday, March 27, Arts Festival focused on uniting Salinas through youth and arts utilizing the 4 blocks of downtown Salinas, the Train Station area, and the Farmer's Market with an additional art exhibit at Hartnell College and hopefully at the Steinbeck Center with *many local arts and community groups* --- a way to promote peace and overcome the barriers which prevent our city from being one cohesive community.

Please mark your calendar. We are planning to have a stage at the Farmer's Market and have arts booths up and down Main Street with poetry, theater, and dance performances. This is a great way to help out teens learn about diverse careers in the arts and community participation. If you are part of a community group that would like to become involved, contact:

Trish Triumpho Sullivan, Director
Artistas Unidos - Artists United
Post Office Box 548 Salinas Ca 93902
Office: 831.758.9126
Cell: 831.594.1799

Web Site: www.artistasunidos.org
E-Mail: director@artistasunidos.org

Did you know...?

Did you know that our advocates are our best recruiters? Did you also know that we have almost 60 children waiting for an advocate of their own? If you know someone who is interested in CASA, invite them to an informational mixer. Our next one will be on Thursday, March 25th at 5:30pm at English Ales Brewery in Marina. Please help us spread the word!!!

A Little Tax Relief!

(Thank you to Advocate John Kennedy for the helpful tips!)

Expenses in a charitable activity:

All deductions are entered on Schedule A - Itemized Deductions- under "Gifts to Charity" section. A taxpayer that takes the Standard Deduction write off does not qualify. All taxpayers either take the standard deduction or itemized deduction write off - not both. Always consult your tax adviser!!!!

1. Automobile - A standard mileage rate deduction of 14 cents a mile is allowed for tax years 2009/2010.
2. Out of Pocket Unreimbursed Expenses: parking tolls/fees... supplies used in a charitable activity... Long-distance telephone fees... any other unreimbursed charitable expense.
3. Travel - All travel expenses incurred in the performance of services away from home if there is no significant element of personal use (including meals & lodging). Meals are generally 50% write off.
4. Any travel expenses paid for third parties who are participants in the charitable activity (CASA child) are 100% deductible.

Advocate Avenue



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

Dee MacDonald	3/2
Magdalena Gutierrez	3/9
Kathy Manley-Coburn	3/11
Marguerite Primrose	3/11
Lin Blaskovich	3/14
Rachel Jarvis	3/17
Jo Greenshields	3/25
Tameka Hill	3/28
Barbara Barnes	3/31

Welcome advocates!!!

Nu Class was sworn in on 2/19/10

Back Row (from left to right): Matt Jones, Melissa Johnson, Sheryl Merrill, Fred Salazar, Carol Maehr, Miguel Mejia, Advocate Supervisor Kylie Kelly, Judge Dauphine

Front Row (from left to right): Advocate Supervisor Tameka Hill, Program Manager Michelle Arnold, Patty Ross

Not Pictured: Becky Rosenberg

Welcome to the CASA team!
We look forward to seeing all that you accomplish as advocates.



Nu Class- Sworn in on 2/19 by Judge Dauphine

Now available in the CASA office!

When You Become 18: A Survival Guide for Teenagers is the second of the State Bar's consumer education series that also includes [Kids & the Law: An A-Z Guide for Parents](#) and [Seniors & the Law: A Guide for Maturing Californians](#).

When You Become 18 addresses a number of issues important to young adults, including information about laws related to: **alcohol, banking, contracts, credit, employment, hate crimes, jury duty, military service, voting**

When You Become 18 was first published in 1991 by California Law Advocates and revised seven times over the past decade. The State Bar took over publication of the guide in 2002. To order copies of *When You Become 18*, send an e-mail to 18@calbar.ca.gov. Please provide your name, complete mailing address, the number of copies desired and a daytime phone number. **Thanks to Advocate Ron Scholl for sharing this info!**

US study shows drop in child abuse

By David Crary Associated Press Posted: 02/02/2010

NEW YORK — A massive new federal study documents an unprecedented and dramatic decrease in incidents of serious child abuse, especially sexual abuse. Experts hailed the findings as proof that crackdowns and public awareness campaigns had made headway.

An estimated 553,000 children suffered physical, sexual or emotional abuse in 2005-06, down 26 percent from the estimated 743,200 abuse victims in 1993, the study found.

"It's the first time since we started collecting data about these things that we've seen substantial declines over a long period, and that's tremendously encouraging," said professor David Finkelhor of the University of New Hampshire, a leading researcher in the field of child abuse.

"It does suggest that the mobilization around this issue is helping and it's a problem that is amenable to solutions," he said.

The findings were contained in the fourth installment of the National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect, a congressionally mandated study that has been conducted periodically by the Department of Health and Human Services. The previous version was issued in 1996, based on 1993 data.

The new study is based on information from more than 10,700 "sentinels" — such as child welfare workers, police officers, teachers, health care professionals and day care workers — in 122 counties across the country. The detailed data collected from them was then used to make national estimates.

The number of sexually abused children decreased from 217,700 in 1993 to 135,300 in 2005-2006 — a 38 percent drop, the study shows. The number of children who experienced physical abuse fell by 15 percent and the number of emotionally abused children dropped by 27 percent.

The 455-page study shied away from trying to explain the trends, but other experts offered their theories. "There's much more public awareness and public intolerance around child abuse now," said Linda Spears, the Child Welfare League of America's vice president for public policy. "It was a hidden concern before — people were afraid to talk about it if it was in their family." She also noted the proliferation of programs designed to help abusers and potential abusers overcome their problems.

Finkelhor, whose own previous research detected a drop in abuse rates, said the study reveals "real, substantial declines" that cannot be dismissed on any technical grounds, such as changing definitions of abuse.

He suggested that the decline was a product of several coinciding trends, including a "troop surge" in the 1990s when more people were deployed in child protection services and the criminal justice system intensified its anti-abuse efforts with more arrests and prison sentences.

Finkelhor also suggested that the greatly expanded use of medications may have enabled many potential child abusers to treat the conditions that otherwise might have led them to molest or mistreat a child. (continued on next page)

"There's also been a general change in perceptions and norms about what one can get away with, so much more publicity about these things," he said.

One curious aspect of the study was the manner of its release. Although HHS had launched the study in 2004 and invested several million dollars, it was posted a few days ago on the Internet with no fanfare — neither a press release nor a news conference. Finkelhor, noting that experts in the field had been impatiently awaiting the study, described this low-profile approach as "shocking."

The findings might be disconcerting to some in the child-welfare field who base their funding pitches on the specter of ever-rising abuse rates, said Richard Wexler, executive director of the National Coalition for Child Protection Reform.

"The best use of scarce child welfare dollars is on prevention and family preservation — not on hiring more people to investigate less actual abuse," said Wexler.

The study found some dramatic differences in child abuse rates based on socio-economic factors. Poor children were three times more likely than other kids to experience abuse, and rates of abuse in African-American families were significantly higher than for whites and Hispanics.

Family structure also was a factor — for example, children whose single parent had a live-in partner faced an abuse rate 10 times that of a child living with two parents.

Wexler said a primary reason for the overall drop in abuse rates was the relatively prosperous economy during the period under study.

"The fact that the economic gains were unequal explains why maltreatment declined less in black families," he said.

The main author of the study, Andrea Sedlak of the Rockville, Md.-based research firm Westat Inc., said she was heartened by the overall findings of declining abuse rates. However, she was troubled to find that more than half of child maltreatment incidents are not investigated by child-protection agencies.

"Is the system still so strapped?" she asked. "There's still a lot of material here saying the system has a long way to go."

The study does not cover the recent period in which the United States plunged into a recession, prompting some reports of increased domestic violence and abuse in hard-off families.

On the Net: New abuse study: <http://tinyurl.com/yayksyk>;
National Coalition for Child Protection Reform: <http://nccpr.info/>

Advocate Alyca Tanner has donated eight tickets to the upcoming performance of *Anything Goes!* at the Monterey Peninsula College Theatre.

The run dates are:
March 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 19, 20 at 8pm
March 7, 13, 20, 21 at 2pm

Synopsis (from broadwaymusicalhome.com): Sailing on the S.S. American are a gangster on the run posing as a minister, a former evangelist who is a nightclub singer, traveling with her are four tap-dancing "Angels", a society miss who is engaged to an English gentleman (also on the ship), and her ex-boyfriend that stows away on the boat to try to win her back. A series of comical mistaken identities ensues as the passengers and crew sing and dance their way across the Atlantic.

This fun farce is not necessarily suitable for all ages, so these tickets need not go solely to CASAs wanting to take their CASA children. The tickets are first come, first served, so let us know ASAP if *Anything Goes!* goes for you!



I.L.P.

Date: Saturday 3/13/10

Time: 9:30am—3:00pm

Hartnell College

Gymnasium

411 Central Avenue

Salinas, CA

Getting There...

Transportation will be available for South County & Monterey Peninsula youth. Please notify us by March 1, 2010 if you will need transportation.

Independent City

Independent City is for all ILP eligible youth ages 15 ½ to 21.

Child care will be provided. If needed, please provide the name & age of child no later than March 1, 2010.



Is **INDEPENDENT CITY** right for you?

Are **YOU** preparing for the REAL world?

Are **YOU** planning to move out?

Would **YOU** like to experience some of the things that will be your responsibility after you leave foster care?

Join others for a day of fun and challenges...including:

- Open a bank account
- Select friendly roommates
- Rent a place to live
- Apply for services

What's in it for **ME**?

- Cool Prizes
- Food, Fun, & Games
- Confidence in Taking Next Steps to Emancipation

To register to attend this event contact Rav Gonzalez at (831) 796-1533 or gonzarh@cs.wstate.ca.us.

For additional information about this event and the Independent Living Program, contact the I.L.P. Office at (831) 796-1533.

Independent City is sponsored by:





News and Information from the National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association

Program Spotlight

30 Advocates in 30 Days: An Inventive Volunteer Recruitment Campaign

Siobhan Greene
Executive Director
CASA of Monterey County
Salinas, CA

As CASA or GAL programs, we've all been there...wishing we had more volunteer advocates, knowing we are not meeting all the needs in our communities. This past summer, CASA of Monterey County was going through another round of growing pains. We'd had some staff turnover, and our recruitment efforts were feeling a bit stale. Our list of children awaiting an advocate was growing. Typically our program hosts at least four training sessions a year, and we never want to miss an opportunity to bring on more advocates. But that summer, with fewer inquiries and internal changes, our anticipated training session did not seem to be coming together. So we made the difficult decision to hold off until the fall, when our hiring choices were finalized, staff was properly trained and we had a little more time to recruit prospective advocates.

In early August, I approached the staff with a new idea. Feeling as though we needed a compelling message, I told them I wanted to recruit 30 advocates in 30 days. None of us were sure how we could do that, but we agreed it had a good ring to it. Knowing we needed help, I called on our favorite PR guru Marci Bracco, who does pro-bono work for us, and asked her to work her magic! And so began our campaign.

Marci set about writing press releases and flooded the media. We planned a kick-off event, complete with live music, raffle prizes and a ribbon-cutting hosted by the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce. I wanted a button to wear and charged the staff with coming up with ideas for a catchy slogan to attract attention to the campaign. In no time flat, my program manager, Michelle Arnold, thought of "Are You One of the 30?"

The kick-off event took place on September 1 at a local business that has been very generous to our program. Me-N-Ed's Pizzeria donated the venue, pizza and soft drinks along with a few bottles of wine. One of our board members gathered a few friends and some talented youth, and together they rocked the house with great music. Board members involved in retail or hospitality donated raffle prizes.

It's always a little nerve-wracking to throw a party when you aren't sure who is coming, but by the start time, there was a line of people coming in the door. They were asked to sign in and pick up an information packet in return for a ticket for the raffle prizes. Current advocates, staff and board members were identified to host informal Q&A sessions with our guests. More than 65 people attended, including three judges, chamber members (who gave the campaign its official start) and current volunteers. We had a sign-up sheet for pre-training interviews and held out one raffle prize—a special overnight stay at Chaminade Resort and Spa in Santa Cruz—for those who signed up that evening to schedule an interview.

Staff, board and volunteers wore the “Are You One of the 30?” buttons for the entire month of September. For consistency, we created a cheat sheet for our button-wearers to hand out when someone asked, “The 30 What?” Excitement built as we told each other stories of who asked the question...the teller at the bank, someone at the farmer’s market, a fellow Rotarian, the barista at the local coffee shop and our favorite—the juvenile court judge!

Every print publication in our community ran some kind of news brief on the campaign, including a feature article in the *Monterey County Herald*. From the press, inquiries were rolling in by the end of August. A total of 45 pre-training interviews were held in September and October. We then hosted two concurrent training sessions in October—one daytime, one evening—to accommodate a total of 37 new recruits. Only three people did not complete the process.

On November 13, we hosted a public swearing-in of our new recruits in our Board of Supervisors’ Chamber. Judges, system partners, staff, board members, family and friends were on hand to congratulate the new trainees, let them know how significant their commitment to children is and assure them we would all be there to support the journey that lay ahead. The *Salinas Californian* came and took photos for a feature that will run in a future newspaper insert.



With this influx of new advocates, we’re ready to cut our waitlist by almost 40%! It has been so exciting to see these results, we’re already planning an April reprise of the campaign.

It took everyone working together, and my team delivered in grand style. My wish is that other CASA programs will experience the success we have with a similar approach.

Do you have a program innovation to share with *Connection* readers? We’d love to hear about it! Send an email with a brief summary totheconnection@nationalcasa.org.



Join us as we kick off our next
30-in-30
Advocate Recruitment Campaign!

Thursday, April 1st
5:30pm
Kula Ranch
www.kula-ranch.com

Please help us spread the word to new potential advocates...
For more information, contact Michelle at 455-6800 or michelle@casamonterey.org.