



THE COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE (CASA) MOVEMENT IN CALIFORNIA

Across California, thousands of Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) build close relationships with and serve as advocates for California's most vulnerable children. CASAs are highly trained volunteers from the community. They are appointed by juvenile courts as one-on-one advocates for children who are under the jurisdiction of the courts (foster children) because of abuse, neglect, or abandonment.

A LETTER FROM A CHILD TO HER CASA

"Hola Maggie!

...I thank God for putting you in my life. You know they say "People come and go. Gods puts them in your way" ...

I don't know if I make sense but I want -n- will try to keep you. Cuz I always push my real friends away -n- I don't want to do that again.

You've been there 4 me, in good-n-bad times. Thanx a lot 4 being you.

For caring - for changing me. Now I know not everyone wants to hurt me."

- Evelyn, former foster youth

A SNAPSHOT OF FOSTER CARE & CASA IN CALIFORNIA¹

- There are approximately **80,000** children in foster care in California. They have each been abused, abandoned or neglected. Sadly, many children can become victims a second time in an overwhelmed foster care system that does not allow for close attention to each child. These children then face tremendous obstacles to becoming healthy, successful adults.

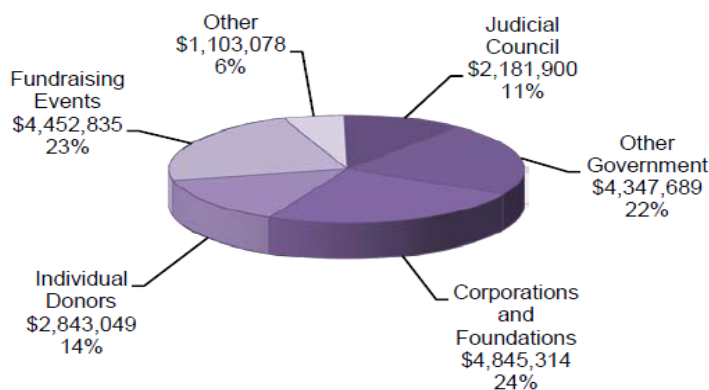
- The first CASA program in California began providing services to children in 1978 and has been a proven model of services for 30 years. Today, there are 41 local CASA programs serving **44** of California's **58** counties including 1 Tribal CASA program that serves 4 tribal court jurisdictions.

- In 2009, the staff-to-volunteer ratio ranged from 1 to 55, with a median of 30 volunteers per staff member.

- Studies consistently show that children with CASAs are²:
 - More likely to receive necessary and appropriate services,**
 - More likely to be adopted,**
 - Half as likely to re-enter the foster care system after they leave.**

- The vast majority of CASA programs are operated as non-profit organizations. The chart to the right shows their major over-all revenue sources in 2009. As you can see public funding sources account for about 38% of the total funding for California CASA programs.

Figure 1. Sources of Revenue in 2009



- In 2009, about **9,365** CASA volunteers (a 22% increase from 2006) donated **425,420** hours of their time, at a monetary value of about **\$9,903,840**. Although this is a significant number, it is not nearly enough to meet the needs of these most vulnerable children.

¹ CASA information excerpted from Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) (Center for Families, Children & the Courts, 2006), California CASA Programs 2005 - 2009 Reports; and from Keeping Our Promise: A Policy Brief on State Investment in CASA Programs (California CASA Association, 2007).

² See A Systematic Review of the Impact of Court Appointed Special Advocates, Youngclarke, et. al.; Journal of the Center for Families, Children & the Courts (2004), pp. 109-126.

³ State funding principally consists of grants from the AOC. Other public funding includes resources from the federal government, counties and local courts. Private funding includes resources from individual donors, fundraising events, corporation s& foundations.

