



# Court Appointed Special Advocates FOR CHILDREN

CASA of LOS ANGELES

April-June 2009



Volunteers making a difference one child at a time.

323.526.6666

www.casala.org

## Delores Judge, 2009 CASA of the Year

By Donna Carson, CASA Supervisor

A 10-year-old child was overwhelmed with sorrow after her mother was killed in a car accident, and, as a result, "Rachel" entered foster care and became a dependent of the Court. The Judge on Rachel's case referred the little girl to the CASA program, and **Delores Judge** was appointed to be her CASA.

**Delores** quickly learned that Rachel *knew* her grandmother and was desperate to be with family, but the Court had determined the grandmother was not a suitable placement for Rachel. Why? Because the grandmother was a drug addict with a lengthy history of being in and out of jail. **Delores** was deeply touched by the warmth and heart of this child, so **Delores** was determined to find a family member.

With considerable bravery, **Delores** decided to visit Rachel's grandmother (a drug addict), and, because of **Delores'** remarkable communication skills, the grandmother tells **Delores** that Rachel has an aunt living in Kentucky.

Subsequently, **Delores** seeks out and finds Rachel's aunt in Kentucky, and, after a lot of research and many phone calls, the **CASA** informs the Court that, with the Court's permission, she will voluntarily travel with Rachel to meet her family in Kentucky. The rest is history! This vulnerable child is truly living "happily ever after" with her family in Kentucky!!



**Delores** became a CASA in 1997. In her "pre-CASA days," she was a Deputy Sheriff for the County of Los Angeles, serving the community in which she had grown up and coming to believe "anything is possible." Because of her experiences with potential dangers and educational deficits for children in some of the poorest areas of Los Angeles, when **Delores** retired as a Deputy Sheriff, she wanted to become a CASA volunteer.

The following list briefly describes the cases and outcomes of other cases to which **Delores** has been appointed:

- \* Advocated for a boy who the CASA found was being abused by his group home caretakers; he was moved to a safe home.
- \* Facilitated finding an adoptive home for a boy thought to be "unadoptable."

- \* Advocated for a psychiatric assessment of a child who had been labeled "unable to learn" by his school; the assessment led to the child being moved to an appropriate school, where he began to earn "A"s and "B"s.
- \* Advocated for and facilitated provision of appropriate services a grandmother needed in order to care for her two grandsons. **Delores** also helped to create appropriate IEP's for the brothers.
- \* Advocated for the Court to grant a name change for a child whose drug-addicted mother had bestowed "an awful" name on his birth certificate.

Currently, **Delores** is assigned to the case of an 11-year-old boy, who has been completely abandoned by his adoptive family. **Delores** discovered that this child is very smart, but his depression has made it impossible to assess his educational status. **Delores** did the research to find that this boy was an "A" & "B" student in regular grade level classes. The boy's current school was about to send him to an inappropriate school for very disabled students, but **Delores** requested an education advocate attorney, and together they have reversed the education plan for the boy.

**CASA Delores Judge**, for all of your incredible efforts over the years, CASA of Los Angeles thanks you and honors you as **Volunteer of the Year 2009. Congratulations!**



## Robin McGraw Honors New CASAs

*Congratulations to all the recent graduates!*

Kimberlyn Allen  
Whitney Axley  
Rita Cazares  
Audrey Davidow Lapidus  
Shanie Evans-Dowridge  
Alex Guerrero  
Audrey Israel  
Cecilia Johnson  
Dorothy Johnson  
Inta Kipper  
Richard Kipper

Susan Klempner  
Lara Mackey  
Jacquelyn Nevescole  
Nadeen Nissley  
Claude C. Nuckols  
Eryn O'Neal  
Lisa Panas  
Virginia Perez  
Peter Petzold  
Lynn Pittenger  
Ann Pratt

Charles Pratt  
Dana Sifakis  
Francine Sohn  
Joyce Sutedja  
Karen F. Taylor  
Tobhiyah (Tobi) Tommaney  
Kenneth Topolsky  
Patricia Webster  
Esther Zaidman



*Robin McGraw, Michael Piraino, CEO National CASA Association, and Margaret Henry, Los Angeles Juvenile Court Supervising Judge.*

### **Forgotten Children campaign**

Recently, **Robin McGraw** joined the final day of training for new CASA volunteers at the Children's Courthouse in Monterey Park. She witnessed, first-hand, the fear and anxiety in the faces of children who have been abused, neglected and abandoned. What she saw really drove home the important role a CASA has in making a difference in the life of a foster child.

**Robin**, and husband **Dr. Phil McGraw**, are spokespersons for National CASA's *Forgotten Children* campaign. The goal of the *Forgotten Children* campaign is to bring awareness of the issue and increase the number of children served by CASA volunteers.

For more information on the *Forgotten Children* campaign visit [http://www.nationalcasa.org/news\\_events/fc\\_overview.html](http://www.nationalcasa.org/news_events/fc_overview.html).

## Lancaster CASA Swears in Seven New Volunteers



Congratulations to the March graduates:

**Ellen Berlin**  
**Mariko Castleberry**  
**Gina G. Erwin**  
**Deborah Greaves**  
**Antionette R. Oliver**  
**Constance Powell**  
**Jean Youngquist**

### CASA Office Wish List

Can you, or someone you know, donate any of the following?

The Lancaster office needs a refrigerator with a freezer, approximately 14.3 cubic ft. No side-by-side as there is limited space! Any color will do, and a freezer on top is preferred. Contact Pam Hardy at 661/945-6483.



Monterey Park is in need of (2) Point & Shoot digital cameras with a minimum of 8-megapixels, and 4-gigabyte memory cards, such as the Canon PowerShot A590IS.

Fellowes Office Laminating Machine.

An External Hard Drive 500 GB (ex. Seagate FreeAgent Go)

One page puzzles or activity sheets for teens waiting for their court appearance.

For Monterey Park donations, please contact Carol Marlowe at 323/526-6315 or [cmarlowe@lasuperiorcourt.org](mailto:cmarlowe@lasuperiorcourt.org).

**Your donation will be acknowledged as a charitable in-kind gift, for tax purposes.**

### News from the Program Director

*By Teresa Luna*

This month, I will be leaving CASA to take a position at the Van Nuys Courthouse. I leave with some sadness as I have come to know many of you and have been touched by your generosity. I want to take the opportunity to thank each of you who have given your time, provided feedback, and donated hours of work and other resources to our CASA children and also to our program. I am appreciative of your good will and I am confident that you will continue to extend your support to David Melendez, our capable Executive Director, and Sarita Carden, one of our exceptional Program Supervisors, who will be assuming my responsibilities as Interim Program Coordinator, and all of our wonderful staff. My warmest regards and best wishes to each of you, my CASA family. It is your work that sparks hope and inspires others like you to also give of their time and love to make the difference in the life of a child.

There is nothing more important.

# WOW! I Can't Believe It's Been Six Years!

*As CASAs, we hope for children to find permanence through reunification, legal guardianship, or adoption. Madison, a former CASA child, wrote the following school essay about her forever family.*

*By Madison, age 11*

WOW! I can't believe it has been almost six years that I've been with my family. My dad can't believe that I have grown so tall and the same with my mom. When I first came to my family I was only up to my mom and dad's hips, but now I'm up to his chin and her nose! WOW!! MIRACULOUS!!!

Did you know that I have been moved eight times? I used to be a foster child, meaning I could not stay with my birth mom because she wasn't able to take care of me! Foster homes are not permanent homes, so I got moved eight times, and the seventh home I stayed in was not very pretty at all. The school I went to wasn't a very good one. WOW! What a difference it was switching to Mountain-view!

Six years ago this December I was my parents' Christmas present. WOW, did they love it! My uncle put a big red bow in my hair and I



*Madison with her brothers and their mom and dad of six years!*

came out with a big smile on my face. My mom and dad were so happy. For a while I was my mom's magnet. I never stopped following her around the house and I even went into the bathroom with her, but finally she told me to stay on the other side of the door.

A month later we went to see my brothers, Austin & Joey. They were in a different foster home than I was. When I was there we were so happy because we hadn't seen each other for six months. WOW!! That's a long time to be separated. One week later they moved into our home and we were

finally together again! After a while, we were adopted.

WOW!! I can't believe that it has been six years that I've been with my brothers and my mom and dad and WOW we are a really happy family!

*Madison and her brothers were matched with their adoptive family after appearing on Wednesday's Child.*

*Madison's CASA was Jan Miller and the boys' CASA was Sandra Solis.*

# CASA Volunteer Appreciation Lunch

**Thursday, May 14, 2009**

11:45 a.m.—1:30 p.m. at Luminarias Restaurant, Monterey Park  
 Invitations are on the way!

*Special Recognition for 2009 Volunteer of the Year, Delores Judge,  
 and for the following CASAs with 25, 15, 10, 5, and 2 years of service.*

**Class of '84 (25 Years)**

Jerrie Brown  
 Sandy Jefferson  
 Joan MacLaughlin

**Class of '94 (15 Years)**

Carole Gibson  
 Nirja Kapoor  
 Josephine Martinez  
 Marie Scanlan  
 Susan Silver  
 Judy Weinstein

**Class of '99 (10 Years)**

Helga Carr-Gendell  
 Gretchen Earnest  
 Polly Garstka  
 Sandra Guerrero  
 June Sale

**Class of '04 (5 Years)**

Christine Beilinson  
 Kathleen Biener  
 Louise Bieschke  
 Martha Byrnes  
 Alan Cunningham  
 Theresa Emerick

Brooke Forsythe  
 Kimberly Fry  
 Pam Hardy  
 Susan Kowalski  
 Victoria Long

Cindy Nasser  
 Karen Pines  
 Karen Rodriguez  
 Don Rothman  
 Armin Szatmary  
 Shivonne Theresia  
 Susan Volz

**Class of '07 (2 Year)**

Crystal Abren  
 Teo Alfero  
 Scott Allen  
 Maritza Aviles  
 Carmen Beale  
 Mary Ann Bell  
 Tom Bell  
 Kristin Chambers  
 Chris Christophersen  
 Nancy Copeland  
 Shirley Cutler  
 Miranda de Pencier  
 Rosemarie Diegnan

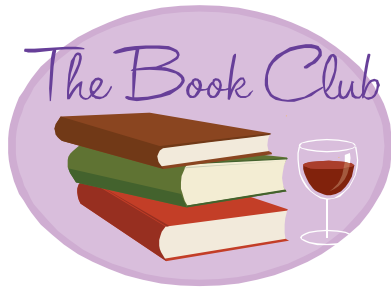
Joy Dolce  
 Rachel Dworkin  
 Bebe Emerman  
 Michelle Estrada  
 Mike Epstein  
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 Athena Garrett  
 Patricia Geoghegan  
 Erma Glover  
 Amalia Guran  
 Denice Hebb  
 Daniel Hewlett  
 Sandi Hugo  
 Michael Hur  
 Eliza Hyde  
 Lynn James  
 Linda Jenson  
 Maria Ku  
 Erin Langford  
 Haelyn Lee  
 Linda Levine  
 Charli Luey  
 Sandra Mardesich  
 Julie Marcus  
 Michael Maxwell  
 Brooke Montgomery  
 Abby Myerson

Elizabeth Nash  
 Linh Nguyen  
 Ramon Ortega  
 Lise Peterson  
 Ruth Port  
 Gayle Prince  
 Marlene Rapkin  
 Sue Redman  
 Christina Reyes  
 Brittany Rice  
 Socorro Salcedo  
 Stephanie Sauter  
 Sandra Scott  
 Stacey Scott  
 Noreen Shanahan  
 Tony Stern  
 Cameron Stewart  
 Kay Van Horn  
 Alan Warfield  
 Beth Wells  
 Stacey Widger  
 Alva Willis  
 Alfred Wilson  
 Mabel Wilson  
 Rebekah Wilson  
 Leina Wong

## Announcements

### Quarterback Club

Gentlemen of CASA: CASA of Los Angeles is proud to announce the Quarterback Club is now recruiting male volunteers in an effort to recruit more male CASAs. The Quarterback Club has already been successful in other CASA organizations around the country and we think it can be successful here as well. The goal is to double the number of male CASAs within one year. So, get yourself in shape and be ready when we come calling; we just might have some fun!



### CASA Book Clubs

CASA **Renne Bilson** hosted the **San Fernando Valley** book club. The group has decided to meet bi-monthly and set the next meeting date for **Tuesday, May 26, at 7:30 p.m.** in the Studio City. The book will be Gay Courter's, *I Speak for this Child: True Stories of a Child Advocate*. Anyone who is interested in an evening meeting is welcome, not just Valley folk! RSVP to [Rbilson@aol.com](mailto:Rbilson@aol.com).

**San Gabriel Valley's** book club was hosted by CASA **Kristin Meredith**. The group decided to meet quarterly, and the next meeting is scheduled for **Saturday, June 27, 2 p.m.** at the home of **Melanie Williams** in Pasadena. The selected book is, *Three Little Words* by Ashley Rhodes-Courter. RSVP to [kmeredith66@yahoo.com](mailto:kmeredith66@yahoo.com).

The **Coastline CASA** club was hosted by CASA **Marlene Rapkin**. The next date is **Wednesday, May 20, 1:30 p.m.** at the home of **Eileen Sheiniuk** in Pacific Palisades. The selected book is, *Three Little Words* by Ashley Rhodes-Courter. RSVP to [eileenbs@aol.com](mailto:eileenbs@aol.com). Join us!

## Thanks To Our Generous Donors

Samuel & Helene Soref Foundation

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SHARE, Inc.



"Share Happily and Keep Endlessly."

John Burton Foundation



### Summer Camps

It's never too early to think about camp for CASA kids! DCFS will have limited funds available this summer to assist with costs. CASAs or caregivers must make the referral directly to the child's CSW, who will work with DCFS Resource Staff who have a list of camps.



Check out the websites for:

UniCamp sponsored by UCLA

Salvation Army's Camp Mt. Crags in Malibu.

YMCA of Glendale has a camp site on Catalina Island.

Camp Max Strauss

# mark your calendars!

## 2009 court holidays

Thu, Jan 1, <i>New Year's Day</i>	Fri, July 3, <i>Independence Day</i>
Mon, Jan 19, <i>MLK Birthday</i>	Mon, Sept 7, <i>Labor Day</i>
Thu, Feb 12, <i>Lincoln Day</i>	Mon, Oct 12, <i>Columbus Day</i>
Mon, Feb 16, <i>Presidents' Day</i>	Wed, Nov 11, <i>Veteran's Day</i>
Tu, Mar 31, <i>Cesar Chavez Day</i>	Thu & Fri, Nov 26-27, <i>Thanksgiving</i>
Mon, May 25, <i>Memorial Day</i>	Fri, Dec 25, <i>Christmas Day</i>

### April

#### Wednesday, April 15, 2009

In-service: *Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder*, By Dr. Michael Weinraub, Pediatrician, Juvenile Court Mental Health  
12:00—1:30 p.m., Monterey Park

#### Friday, April 17, 2009

Orientation for Prospective CASAs  
12:30 p.m.—2:00 p.m., Monterey Park

#### April 25—28, 2009

National CASA Conference  
Denver, CO

[casanet.org/conference](http://casanet.org/conference)

### May

#### Tuesday, May 5, 2009

Inservice: *The Nuts & Bolts of Regional Centers*, By Brian Capra, Regional Center Specialist, Public Counsel and Katie Hornberger, Disability Rights California  
12:00—1:30 p.m., Monterey Park

#### Wednesday, May 20, 2009

Coastline CASA Book Club  
1:30 p.m., Pacific Palisades  
RSVP [eileenbs@aol.com](mailto:eileenbs@aol.com)

#### Thursday, May 21, 2009

Orientation for Prospective CASAs  
12:30 p.m.—2:00 p.m., Monterey Park

#### Tuesday, May 26, 2009

San Fernando Valley Book Club  
8:30 p.m., Studio City  
RSVP [rjbilson@aol.com](mailto:rjbilson@aol.com)

### June

#### Tuesday, June 2, 2009

Orientation for Prospective CASAs  
12:30 p.m.—2:00 p.m., Monterey Park

#### Thursday, June 18, 2009

Orientation for Prospective CASAs  
2:00-3:30 p.m., Monterey Park

#### Thursday, June 25, 2009

In-service: *Independent Living Program (ILP)*, By Michael Pearson, Transition ILP Coordinator, DCFS  
12:00—1:30 p.m., Monterey Park

#### Saturday, June 27, 2009

San Gabriel Valley Book Club  
2:00 p.m., Pasadena  
RSVP [kmeredith66@yahoo.com](mailto:kmeredith66@yahoo.com)

### July

#### NEW CASA TRAINING

8:30 a.m.- 4:00 p.m. daily  
Monterey Park

#### Monday, July 13

#### Tuesday, July 14

#### Thursday, July 16

#### Monday, July 20

#### Thursday, July 23

### November

#### Tuesday, November 9, 2009

New Beginnings Partnership Conf.  
LA Convention Center

### December

#### Monday, December 7, 2009

CASA Holiday Party  
4:00—7:00 p.m., Children's Bureau

## CASA of Los Angeles

CASA of Los Angeles recruits, trains, and supports volunteers who advocate for abused and neglected children in court and the community.

### Main Office

Edelman Children's Court  
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[www.casala.org](http://www.casala.org)

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*Assistant Director* Rene Casarez

*Director of Development* Cheryl Coughlan

*CASA Supervisors* Sarita F. Carden  
Donna Carson  
Charla Gardner Genser  
Lauri Halderman  
Carolyn McGee  
Christine O'Rourke  
Jessica Tachibana  
Luz Weaver

*Program Assistants* Tanisha Brown  
Uriel Ocampo  
Bree Taddwilliams  
Alice Yu

*Consultant* Sue Thompson

### Lancaster Office

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*CASA Supervisor* Melinda Murphy  
*Program Assistant* Pamela Hardy

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Hal Brown, Founding Chairman, Friends of Child Advocates



## **SAVE THE DATE! In-service**

**Wednesday, April 15, 2009  
12:00 p.m.— 1:30 p.m.**

CASA Conference Room, Monterey Park

Topic:  
***Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder***

Presented by  
**Dr. Michael Weinraub, Pediatrician  
Juvenile Court Mental Health**



## **SAVE THE DATE! In-service**

**Tuesday, May 5, 2009  
12:00 p.m.— 1:30 p.m.**

CASA Conference Room, Monterey Park

Topic:  
***The Nuts & Bolts  
of Regional Centers***

Presented by  
**By Brian Capra, Regional Center  
Specialist, Public Counsel and Katie  
Hornberger, Disability Rights California**



CASA of Los Angeles  
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