



Court Appointed Special Advocates FOR CHILDREN CASA of LOS ANGELES

Spring 2010

Volunteers making a difference one child at a time.

323.526.6666

www.casala.org

Judy Smith 2010 CASA Volunteer of the Year

By Sue Thompson

CASA of Los Angeles is proud to announce that **Judy Smith** has been selected **CASA Volunteer of the Year 2010**. Since becoming a CASA in 1993, Judy has passionately advocated for more than 21 children, and spent countless hours speaking on behalf of the CASA program.

The children served by **Judy** have ranged in age from 6 months old to 20 years old. She has addressed wide-ranging issues on her cases, including adoption, family-finding, therapeutic and medical service needs, involvement with Native American tribes, monitoring criminal proceedings impacting teenagers, and transition planning for youth aging out of foster care.

During her 17 years of service, **Judy** has traveled to attend court hearings both in Monterey Park and in the Antelope Valley, and has traversed Los Angeles County to visit her many CASA children. She's never afraid to speak up for her CASA kids whether in or out of court. When a teenager to whom she was appointed made inappropriate statements that resulted in a surprise visit from the authorities, Judy intervened and the situation was quickly re-

solved. And, when relative caretakers of her CASA child's half-siblings blamed the child for their family's involvement in the system and didn't want the girl to have visits with her siblings, **Judy** persevered and successfully facilitated regular sibling visits. **Judy** always develops rapport with the many players involved in her cases and seeks to work collaboratively with everyone involved.

Her concern and compassion for a very lonely, depressed 13-year-old boy, who had been abandoned to the foster care system at a very early age, prompted **Judy** to advocate for the boy's case to be referred to Hollygrove's Family Finding Program. It was soon discovered that the boy was of Native American heritage. Throughout the process, Judy participated in every meeting with family and other significant tribal members. As a result, the boy was connected with extended family members he never knew he had and went from being and feeling alone in the world to being part of a large tribal community. In 2006, DCFS honored **Judy** for her work with the Family Finding Program by presenting her with a Certificate of Appreciation *"For going above and beyond in your*

vision and dedication to ensure youth permanency." That's **Judy** -- always going above and beyond for a child!

A wife, mother, and grandmother of three (soon to be four), **Judy** says she has found her CASA work to be deeply rewarding. "None of my CASA children have had adult figures in their lives who really care about them, who take time to listen to them, and who keep showing up. CASA has given me the opportunity to meet and get to know wonderful children, and the longer I do this work, the more I realize the difference having a CASA makes to these children. Even if we may not always achieve the best outcomes, you know you've been a support person for the child - I just wish every child could have a CASA."

Judy has also been recognized as Superior Court Volunteer of the Year 2010 and was honored earlier this month at the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon at the Music Center.

Congratulations, **Judy**, and thank you for your many years of service to children!



Congratulations
Judy!

Inside this issue:

Aaron Ruben Tribute Article	2
Honoring Years of Service	3
Thank You's	4
Glamour Gowns 2010	5
Judge Nash Article	6
Calendar	7

Remembering Aaron Ruben



By Sue Thompson

We mourn the passing of CASA Aaron Ruben in February 2010, at age 95. Aaron became a CASA in 1988, and remained active on cases until 2007. In 1999, he was honored as CASA Volunteer of the Year. In addition to serving as a dedicated CASA to numerous children in

foster care, Aaron has helped many other former foster youth pursue a college or vocational school education through the Aaron Ruben Endowment Fund, which he established in 2000.

The Endowment Fund provides not only annual scholarships for former foster youth, but also annual funds to CASA of Los Angeles to train new CASA volunteers.

Prior to dedicating himself to helping disadvantaged children, Aaron had a long and distinguished career in radio and television, working first as a writer in radio for Burns

and Allen, Milton Berle, and Fred Allen. He began working in television in the early 50's for *Sid Cesar's Show of Shows*, and then moved on to becoming a producer for such hit shows as *The Andy Griffith Show*, *Gomer Pyle*, *USMC*, *Sanford & Son*, and feature films such as *The Comic*, just to name a few.

Everyone at CASA of Los Angeles extends heartfelt condolences to Aaron's wife of many years, Maureen Arthur Ruben, and the entire Ruben and Arthur family. We will miss Aaron's compassionate, generous spirit, and unbeatable sense of humor.

CASA OF LOS ANGELES MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of CASA of Los Angeles is to improve the lives of the children in the dependency court system through trained, dedicated, and effective volunteer advocates who are professionally supported by an experienced staff.

HONORING OUR VOLUNTEERS YEARS OF SERVICE

CASA Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon

Thursday, April 29, 2010

11:45 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at The California Endowment

Special Recognition for 2010 CASA Volunteer of the Year, Judy Smith and for the following CASAs with 25, 20, 15, 10, 5 and 2 years of service.

Class of '85 (25 Years)

Jan Brice
Monica Byrnes

Class of '90 (20 Years)

Irma Breslauer
Gail Carp
Joan Lee
David Neuman
Joanne Solov
Mary Lou Walbergh

Class of '95 (15 Years)

Roberta Bloom
Peggy Huber
Nancy Paul
Lisa-Marie Silver

Class of '00 (10 Years)

Linda Mokler
Ronald Stewart
Vanessa Taylor
Jackie Tishler
Sheila Whalen
Kimberly Fry

Pam Hardy
Susan Kowalski
Cindy Nasser
Karen Pines
Don Rothman
Armin Szatmary
Shivonne Theresa

Class of '05 (5 Years)

Michael Bleecher
Douglas Borsom
Carol Burke
Lauren Costa
Beverly Farzin-Nia
Jennifer Gerich
Laura Guerrero
Michael Bruce Herron
Ella Marie Hudson
Marge MacLaughlin
Marsha Parkhill
Taryn Rudow
Louise Schwartz

Class of '08 (2 Years)

Heidi Ashcraft
Franziska Balcaen
Janice Barcus
Janet Blair
Derek Bounds
Marilyn Burke
Gayle Byrne
Rosa Carreon
Valerie Carrigan
Sandra Carter
Winnie Ching
Vanessa Costa
Sonia De Leon
Lesley Dunlap
Valerie Edmondson
Melissa Field
Betty Freitag
Brian Gadkinsky
Susan Garcia
Regina Quinn
Sherry Goddard

Kay Harter
Marsha Heller
Emma Hernandez
Laura Hertz
Janie Hodge
Alice Horevitz
Sheryl Jones
Debbie Wick Keen
Wendy Koro
Joseph Kuban
Susan Lord
Joanna MacQueen
Amanda Martindale
Kristin Meredith
Monica Mihell
Ronald Oest
Shannon Payne
Kara Perry
Natasha Prime
Sister Mary Quinn
Carol Brown
Virginia Richie
Whinera Robinson
Wen Shen
Aloysius Silva
Starla Silva
Janie Slysz
Anthony Smith
Edina Somlai
Wendy Takemoto
William Tyler
Jane Van Stedum
Celeste Vos
Melanie Williams
Maryam Zand

**Thank You to the
Volunteer
Appreciation
Luncheon
Committee:**

Rita Giamaniaro, Chair
Jan Barcus
Roberta Bloom
Sarita F. Carden
Alice Horevitz
Carol Marlowe
Chantel Paniagua
Marie Scanlan
Sue Thompson

Thanks To Some of Our Generous Donors

Dwight Stuart Youth Foundation
 Share, Inc.
 Brentwood Presbyterian Church
 Ford & Serviss, LLP
 Greene Broillet & Wheeler, LLP
 The Neighborhood Church
 Selman Breitman, LLP
 Administrative Office of the Courts

Very Special thanks to...

Alpha Upsilon
 Brandi Roth and Bruce Clemens
 Angela Peavy
 CASA June Solnit Sale
 CASA Rosalie Ann Wider
 Terry Butler

For their generous donations

Thank you to all the CASAs who have volunteered in the office:

Trudy Armer	Judy Smith
Jan Barcus	Ron Sparks
Roberta Bloom	Marty Spear
Peggy Byrnes	Jerri Safron
Betty Freitag	Joanne Solov
Elizabeth Moore	Phil Stein
Carol Pursuit	Allison Wilcox
Sue Redman	



Glamour Gowns Committee would especially like to thank the following for their in-kind donations:

Councilwoman Jan Perry
 Supervisor Michael Antonovich
 Chinese Laundry
 David's Bridal
 SHARE, Inc.
 DesignerKaren
 Goldie's
 Hard Candy Cosmetics
 Knight Cleaners
 Linda the Bra Lady, LLC
 Loehmans
 Lorac
 MAC
 Mark/Avon
 Masquerade
 Men's Warehouse
 Naimies Beauty Center
 Neutrogena
 Smashbox Cosmetics
 Spanx
 TIGI

Glamour Gowns Committee Members:

Cortez Wilkes, Chair
 Tracy Boleware
 Karen Bravermann-Freeman
 Brenda Galloway
 Stacy Horn
 Sue Marshall
 Tracee Wilkes Maxwell
 Jennifer Parker-Stanton
 Michaela Pereira
 Amie Petersen
 Sandi Romero-Boada
 Joanne Solov



Glamour Gowns 2010

By Chantel Paniagua

Over 350 excited teenage girls gathered together on March 13, 2010 at the Los Angeles Convention Center for the 9th Annual Glamour Gowns event. They were in for the “royal treatment.” Each girl had a personal shopper that assisted her in picking out a formal gown for a special event, accessories, along with shoes provided from Chinese Laundry, and a goodie bag filled with cosmetics that were donated.

As the girls began to arrive for the event you could see all different kinds of attitudes and facial expressions anticipating what the day would bring. At the end of the day though, each and every girl I saw was smiling and ever so grateful for the wonderful items they received and the great time they enjoyed. This event was truly a wonderful experience that I will never forget. I definitely encourage those who have not yet participated to do so next year and those who have, please continue volunteering to make this a memorable experience for teenage girls in the foster care system.

CASA of Los Angeles would especially like to **Sue Marshall** and **Joanne Solov**, our Board members on the Glamour Gowns committee, **Councilwoman Jan Perry** for underwriting the cost of the Convention Center, **David’s Bridal** who donated 500 brand new dresses, **Chinese Laundry** who donated every single pair of shoes for each girl and the many other companies who donated in their own way to make this year’s event an even greater success. Also, thanks to the numerous volunteers who gave so graciously of their time to help make sure that the event was a great experience for the girls. Lastly, a very special thank you to the Glamour Gowns Committee who once again planned for months on end and took care of every little detail to make sure this was a day that the young ladies would not forget. If you are interested in volunteering for next year’s event, please contact Chantel Paniagua via email at cpaniagua@casala.org



From L to R: CASAs Mary Ann and Tom Bell, CASA teens Janet and Melissa and CASA and Board Member Bruce Herron.



Glamour Gowns Committee members from L to R: Joanne Solov, Christine Yick, Tracee Wilks Maxwell, Cortez Wilks, Jennifer Parker-Stanton, Michaela Pereira, Karen Bravermann, Sue Marshall, Brenda Galloway and Sandi Romero-Boada.



From L to R: CASAs and Board Members Bruce Herron, Joanne Solov, Board Member Pat Trendacosta, Marketing/PR for Chinese Laundry Sally Gonzales, Liz Benavidez for David’s Bridal, Councilwoman Jan Perry and Board Member Sue Marshall.



CASA teens Janet and Melissa excited about their beautiful dresses.

The 'Children's Advocates'

Excerpted from an article written by Judge Michael Nash for *Gavel to Gavel*, Summer/Fall 2009 Issue "Children are the future", Los Angeles Superior Court Judicial Magazine

One of the blessings of working in the Juvenile Dependency Court is the opportunity to work with some of the finest people you will ever meet, particularly those affiliated with CASA of Los Angeles.

CASA stands for Court Appointed Special Advocate. These advocates, known as CASAs, are volunteers who advocate on behalf of abused and neglected children in the foster care system.

The volunteers are recruited by the program, CASA of Los Angeles, which is a private-public partnership sponsored by the Los Angeles Superior Court and a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. The Los Angeles effort began in 1978 and has served thousands of children during its 30-plus years. It currently has offices in both the Edmund D. Edelman Children's Court in Monterey Park and the McCourtney Juvenile Justice Center in Lancaster.

The CASA program was founded by a Juvenile Dependency Court Judge in Seattle in the 1970s. It was founded on the notion that dependency court judges need as much information as possible to make

the difficult and important decisions that are required to make on behalf of abused and neglected children.

Given the heavy caseloads for social workers and attorneys, it is often difficult to obtain the best information available. The idea behind the CASA program was to recruit and train qualified volunteers from the community to obtain the information. Moreover, unlike social workers and attorneys, CASA volunteers generally have a caseload of one child or sibling group.

Los Angeles currently has approximately 300 CASA volunteers to serve more than 24,000 children under our dependency court's jurisdiction. That makes CASA a limited resource. Consequently, volunteers are generally used in the most difficult cases.

For example, take the case of a 15-year-old boy who has been in the foster care system since age 5 and was removed from his foster-adoptive home after a new baby was born to his foster parents. Depression set in, and he began spiraling downward. He refused help for his depression until his

CASA volunteers, a husband and wife team, entered his life. He began to work with a counselor and his self-esteem and grades in school improved and he also obtained a part-time job.

Another extreme case involved a young boy with AIDS. There was little hope for his long-term survival, and another husband-wife CASA team was appointed for him. They worked with his social worker, attorney and doctor to obtain what was then considered an experimental treatment. Miraculously, his health improved.

In reviewing his file, his CASA team learned about a once-prospective adoptive parent. Their relationship was renewed, and the young boy ultimately received what all children are entitled to — a loving, safe, permanent home. Sadly, he eventually succumbed to his illness, but received the gift of love and a family in his life.

These stories and more are typical of the work CASAs do for foster children. Once trained, they are appointed by dependency court judicial officers pursuant to Welfare and Institutions

Code section 102 and California Rules of Court Rule 5.655.

CASAs are expected to visit their assigned child at least monthly and to interview all persons involved with the child, including caregivers, teachers and therapists. After accumulating information, the CASA volunteer prepares a report for the Court that includes recommendations on what the CASA volunteer believes are in the best interests of the child. The needs of each child vary with his or her particular circumstances. As the examples above reflect, the work is often heroic and the results miraculous.

Today there are about 900 CASA programs nationwide with some 70,000 citizen volunteers appointed by juvenile dependency courts. CASA of Los Angeles is one of approximately 35 in California, and the work of the volunteers in Los Angeles ranks with the best of them. Our Juvenile Dependency Court is a much better court because of our CASA program and its truly wonderful people who serve as volunteers. I could never imagine our court functioning without them.

mark your calendars!

upcoming court holidays & closures

Wed, May 19 *Court Closure*
 Mon, May 31 *Memorial Day*
 Wed, Jun 16 *Court Closure*
 Mon, Jul 5 *Independence Day*
 Wed, Jul 21 *Furlough Day*
 Wed, Aug 18 *Furlough Day*

Mon, Sept 6 *Labor Day*
 Wed, Sept 15 *Furlough Day*
 Mon, Oct 11 *Columbus Day*
 Wed, Oct 20 *Furlough Day*
 Thu, Nov 11 *Veteran's Day*
 Wed, Nov 17 *Furlough Day*

April

Thu, April 29
 Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon
 11:30—2:00
 California Endowment

May

Thu, May 6
 12:00 p.m.
 In-Service
 "211 info Line" & "Relative Caregiver Support"

Thu, May 13
 7:00 p.m.
Coastline CASAs will gather at the LA Central Library for Father Greg Boyle's talk on his book *Tattoos of the Heart, Stories of Hope and Compassion*

7:30 p.m.
San Fernando Valley CASAs will discuss *A Love Like No Other: Stories of Adoptive Parents*

Wed, May 26
 12:00-1:30 p.m.
 Orientation for Prospective CASAs
 Antelope Valley Office

June

Thu & Fri, Jun 3-4
 Beyond the Bench XX:
Collaboration Works! Improving Outcomes and Achieving Safety and Stability in Challenging Times
 San Diego Marriott Hotel and Marina

We want your STORIES!

Please e-mail to CASALA@casala.org.

Sat, June 5

12:00 p.m.
San Gabriel Valley CASAs will discuss Father Greg Boyle's *Tattoos of the Heart, Stories of Hope and Compassion*

Wed, June 23

12:00-1:30 p.m.
 Orientation for Prospective CASAs
 Antelope Valley Office

August

Thu, Aug 19
 12:30-2:00 p.m.
 Orientation for Prospective CASAs
 Monterey Park Office

September

NEW CASA SUMMER TRAINING SESSION
 8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m. daily
 Monterey Park
 Wed, Sept 15
 Tue, Sept 21
 Thu, Sept 23
 Tue, Sept 28
 Thu, Sept 30

October

Tue, Oct 5
 12:30-2:00 p.m.
 Orientation for Prospective CASAs
 Monterey Park Office

The mission of CASA of Los Angeles is to improve the lives of the children in the dependency court system through trained, dedicated, and effective volunteer advocates who are professionally supported by an experienced staff.

Main Office

Edelman Children's Court
 201 Centre Plaza Drive, Suite 3
 Monterey Park, CA 91754-2142
 Phone (323) 526-6666 Fax (323) 264-5020
www.casala.org

Acting Executive Director Bruce Herron
Acting Development Director Roger Riddlehoover
Executive Assistant Kai Teng

Program Director Sarita F. Carden
Program Managers Lauri Halderman
 Carolyn McGee
 Rita Giamaniaro
Program Assistants Yolanda Plascencia
 Chantel Paniagua

Volunteer Support Associate Sue Thompson
Consultant

Antelope Valley Office

1040 W. Avenue J, Room 1130
 Lancaster, CA 93534-3329
 Phone (661) 945-6483 Fax (661) 723-6875

Program Manager Melinda Murphy
Program Assistant Pamela Hardy
Volunteer Support Associate Rebekah Wilson

Board of Directors

President Patricia Y. Trendacosta, Esq.
Treasurer Ralph Walter
Secretary Joanne Solov
 Steve Bloom
 Cathleen Cobb
 Jacquie Dolan
 Bruce Herron
 Sue Marshall
 Michael Pappas, Esq.
 Roger Riddlehoover
 John Sabourin

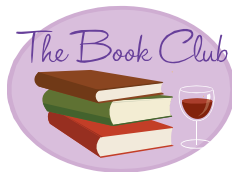
Honorary Advisory Board

Edward P. Roski, Jr., *Chair* Michaela Pereira
 Robb Evans Sandra Rudnick
 Pat Haden Richard H. Sheehan, Jr.
 Dr. Astrid Heger Robert J. Skousen, Esq.
 Kerry McCluggage Doug Weld

Honorable Peter Giannini, Founding Judge,
 Los Angeles Child Advocates
 Hal Brown, Founding Chairman, Friends of Child Advocates
 (Deceased)

CASA Book Clubs

Have fun and earn continuing ed hours!



San Gabriel Valley's book club will meet on **June 5, at 12:00 p.m.**, at Sue Thompson's house. This will be a potluck. The selected book is *Tattoos on the Heart, Stories of Hope and Compassion* by Father Greg Boyle. To RSVP for this meeting, e-mail 4suthompson@gmail.com.

The **Coastline** CASAs will meet on **May 13, at 7:00 p.m.** at LA Central Library. Father Greg Boyle will be talking about his new book *Tattoos of the Heart: Stories of Hope and Compassion* as part of the library's ALOUD program series. You can register at www.aloudla.org or 213-228-7025. The program is free although they suggest a \$5.00 donation.

San Fernando Valley's book club will meet **May 13, at 7:30 p.m.** at the home of Lorna Boyd in Sherman Oaks. The book is "A Love Like No Other: Stories from Adoptive Parents." It is a series of essays by 20 leading writers who are all adoptive parents. To RSVP for this meeting, email rjbilson@aol.com

To receive a copy of the book club guidelines, contact Chantel Paniagua at cpaniagua@casala.org.

Start a CASA book club in your area!

Contact **Sue Redman** at sueredman@att.net.

AARON RUBEN SCHOLARSHIPS

FOR CASA YOUTH

CASA youth headed for college or vocational school are eligible to apply for an Aaron Ruben Scholarship. Five scholarships in the amount of \$2,000 are awarded annually. The scholarship endowment was established in 2000 by former CASA, the late Aaron Ruben and his wife, Maureen. Applications are available in the CASA office or via e-mail to Sue Thompson: sthompson@casala.org and completed applications must be received by June 30, 2010.

CASA IN-SERVICE

Edelman Children's Court

Thursday, May 6

12:00-1:30 p.m.

In-Service
"211 info Line"
and
"Relative Caregiver Support"

REMINDER:

If your insurance has expired within the past 6 months, please be sure to email, fax, or mail us a copy of your new insurance card. This information is needed to comply with the rules of our supervising agencies.

casala@casala.org
Fax: 323-264-5020

Available Online!

To view the *current issue* of the CASA newsletter, go to the website at www.casala.org and click on the "Current Advocates" link.