

# Help us change the statistics of life for *Foster Kids*

Without a CASA, youth experience  
a higher rate of:

- Addiction, homelessness, and low self-worth
- Only **55.3%** of foster youth will graduate high school
- Only **15%** of foster youth will attend college
- Less than **3%** will graduate from college

By becoming part of the CASA family, either financially or as an Advocate, you will be working together with us to positively impact the foster youth of Fresno/Madera counties.



**Make a Difference!**  
Scan the QR code to  
learn more and donate.  
[www.casafresnomadera.org](http://www.casafresnomadera.org)

## Going Above and Beyond CASA Provides the Voice That *Empowers* Foster Youth

Foster youth and Advocates receive support from the full network of the CASA Program.

- Birthday Celebration
- A Trip to the Ballpark
- Holiday Toy Drive
- Holiday Party
- Work Employment Opportunities
- Rainy Season Gear (Windbreakers & Umbrellas)
- Summer Fun Activities Initiative
- Driver Education Opportunities
- The City Center Collaboration
- Independent Living Classes & Activities
- Youth Education & Resources
- Graduation Acknowledgement
- Backpacks and Shoes for Back-to-School
- Career Apprentice Training

Fresno: 2300 Tulare St., #210 | Fresno, CA 93721  
Madera: 300 S. G St. | Madera, CA 93637  
City Center: 2025 E. Dakota Ave. | Fresno, CA 93726  
Ph: 559.244.6485



Court Appointed Special Advocates

The Voice That Empowers Foster Youth

Fresno & Madera Counties

## Our foster youth are waiting for an *Advocate* today!



Court Appointed Special Advocates

The Voice That Empowers Foster Youth

Fresno & Madera Counties





**Wilma Tom Hashimoto**  
Executive Director  
CASA of Fresno and  
Madera Counties

CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) are often the only constant adults for children in the foster care system. Imagine being a child removed from your family—not understanding why you are being separated from your siblings, pets, school friends, and other trusted relationships you've had for years. The next day, you find yourself with unfamiliar people in the foster care system.

This is currently the situation for over 2,000 children in foster care. Often, they have been severely abused or neglected for a long period of time. Our Advocates are assigned to just one child or sibling set. They advocate in the court room for home permanence, school, and their wellbeing. CASA gives hope. Please help us change the trajectory and provide hope for 170 more children in Fresno/Madera with a financial donation today.

**Your giving helps CASA reach more children who currently do not have a CASA to advocate for them, helping them to go from helplessness to hopefulness and changing their future forever.**

### Who We Are and Who We Serve

- Court Appointed Special Advocates serving foster youth ages 0–20

### How We Support Youth

- CASA recruits and trains Advocates to be the voice that empowers foster youth

**We need your help to serve more local children and youth in foster care!**

## What People Are Saying About How CASA Can Change Lives



### Foster Youth

Please send me someone who cares enough about me to share my life's journey and point me in the right direction to change my life for the better.



### Advocate

I became an Advocate because I wanted to help end the homelessness crisis by helping youth to walk through these confusing times. By being the voice that empowers foster youth, I will be able to help these kids reach their full potential in life sooner than later.



### CASA Supervisor and Program Coordinator

We care about making sure the kids and the Advocates have everything they need to navigate the daily challenges of life. All foster youth have experienced different levels of trauma that often leave them hopeless and lost. Our goal is to help the kids turn their lives around and live a productive and happy life no matter what trauma they have faced in the past.

We utilize our many years of experience and relationships in the foster care system to train others, solve difficult human situations within the system, and bring resolve to challenges for advocates and foster youth.



### Donor

I wish more people would get involved with CASA to help them embrace more of the kids out of the 2,000 kids currently in the foster care system.

**CASA cares deeply and supports foster youth because they are part of *Our Family!***

*Join us* by sending your donation today to **HELP us care for children on our waiting list.**

### Consider Ways to Give Financially

- Donate to help us care for youth in foster care
- Become a Monthly Donor
- Make an Annual Gift
- Sponsor our Annual Events
- Gift of Crops
- Planned Giving
  - Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD)
  - Donor Advised Funds (DAF)
  - Estate/Will/Legacy gifts
- In-Kind Gifts
- Purchase Granville Home of Hope Tickets from CASA

### Become a Volunteer

- CASA—Court Appointed Special Advocate
- Event/Mentor Volunteer

**Contact Us:** [casa@casafresno.org](mailto:casa@casafresno.org)







# Strategic Plan

July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2027



# CASA

CHAMPIONING  
**EVERY** CHILD



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Dear Friends,

As we near the end of our current three-year strategic plan, **CASA of Fresno and Madera Counties** is poised for even greater impact. Five months ago, we began the facilitation of an inclusive strategic planning process involving our staff, board, partners, and community members. Two community input sessions enabled us to build upon the assets, opportunities, and innovations of our stakeholders effectively shaping our new **2024-2027 Strategic Plan** focused on **increasing the number of vulnerable children and youth in foster care served** by CASA of Fresno and Madera Counties.

I am grateful to our dedicated and knowledgeable Strategic Planning Steering Committee. This committee guided the planning process and ensured alignment with our organization's broader objectives. With the support of various subcommittees, our strategic direction was made clear, measurable and attainable. We also established a stronger connection between CASA, the brand, and its meaning - Court Appointed Special Advocates - in our revised mission statement and captured a **vision of unwavering community support and advocacy for the thousands of children and youth placed in foster care every year.**

Core values were also developed, and we hope they speak to you and the children and youth we serve. Each core value is supported by three actions/behaviors and each action statement starts with "We" (as in CASA) but can easily be interchanged with "I" to embody a personal commitment. We hope you will join us in our quest to remain **inclusive, empowering, collaborative** and ever **resilient as we partner in the best interests of children.**

I am also thankful for our community members and Board of Directors, leadership team and staff who, during a very busy time, contributed thoughtfully and will lead our **important work over the next three years.** Finally, thank you to Natalie Feil, who adeptly organized the many moving parts, and Paula Castadio of C Strategies, who facilitated our efforts and boosted awareness of CASA of Fresno and Madera Counties throughout the process.



*In partnership for children,*

Wilma Tom Hashimoto  
Executive Director





*“I wanted to make a meaningful impact on the lives of abused and neglected children to create better opportunities for their future.”*

- Anonymous Advocate





# OUR STORY

Fresno County joined the national CASA network in 1996 to serve the best interests of our most vulnerable children and youth in foster care. With only one full-time staff member and a handful of volunteers, the work to recruit and grow a base of community volunteers to become Court Appointed Special Advocates began. The success of this program was recognized in 2006 when CASA was granted the opportunity to expand to Madera County.

Almost three decades later, caring volunteer advocates continue to be trained today to step into and out of dependency court on behalf of children in foster care who have experienced abuse or neglect. CASA of Fresno and Madera Counties draws its inspiration from national founder Judge David Soukup's original goal: to be a guiding voice for our community's most at-risk children. This mission has been tirelessly carried out with the help of local advocates, social workers, attorneys, resource parents, short-term residential therapeutic professionals, therapists, doctors, teachers, and the myriads of other individuals responsible for the care of our foster youth. CASA of Fresno and Madera Counties has grown significantly since the early days, now employing 20 full-time staff, and supporting and equipping 200 volunteer advocates appointed by the court to empower more than 325 of the most at-risk youth in foster care to reach their full potential.



## Mission

CASA of Fresno and Madera Counties trains volunteers as Court Appointed Special Advocates to be a guiding voice empowering vulnerable children and youth in foster care to reach their full potential in life.

## Vision

To realize unwavering community support and advocacy for children and youth in foster care.

## Tagline

*The voice that empowers foster youth.*







# OUR CORE VALUES

These core values were developed to speak to all of CASA of Fresno and Madera Counties' stakeholders, including the children and youth we serve. Each core value is supported by three actions/behaviors and each action statement starts with "We" (as in CASA) but can easily be interchanged with "I" to embody a personal commitment.

## Inclusiveness

**We believe that everyone deserves to be seen, heard and respected.**

### Actions

- We honor your story.
- We listen with an open mind.
- We thoughtfully consider our actions and words.

## Empowerment

**We believe in personal growth and development.**

### Actions

- We make learning a priority.
- We provide and receive constructive feedback.
- We celebrate successes big and small.

## Collaboration

**We believe we work better together.**

### Actions

- We build trust and care for our community.
- We focus on positive impact.
- We communicate and partner with intention.

## Resilience

**We believe in finding solutions that make a difference.**

### Actions

- We positively approach new challenges.
- We seek to understand change.
- We leverage our strengths and skills.





# OUR GOALS

## GOAL 1:

Serve more children and youth in foster care.



## GOAL 2:

Measure CASA's impact.



## GOAL 3:

Advocate for positive foster care systems change.



## GOAL 4:

Diversify and increase sustainable revenue sources.



## GOAL 5:

Maximize staff potential through wellness, efficient practices, and core values.





## GOAL 1 - Serve more children and youth in foster care.

Every child deserves a champion as they navigate through the foster care system. CASA of Fresno and Madera Counties is eager to grow and strengthen its infrastructure to ensure more children and youth in foster care have an advocate by their side. There are currently more than 3,000 children in our local foster care system. Court Appointed Special Advocates are assigned the highest risk children and youth from ages 0 to 21. Each volunteer advocate supports one child or sibling set and maintains these relationships for at least 12-18 months. To extend our reach from 325 to 500 children/youth over the next three years, CASA of Fresno and Madera Counties will expand its base of volunteer advocates, hire the staff to support them, and develop meaningful retention strategies to increase advocate longevity.





# GOAL 1 - Serve more children and youth in foster care.

## Strategy 1 - Expand our advocates.

### Actions

- Develop and launch a three-year targeted marketing plan to diversify and recruit advocates. Jul 2024
- Track advocate recruitment to reach a goal of 75 new advocates every year with a net gain each year. Monthly

## Strategy 2 - Grow staff to support our advocates.

### Actions

- Hire an additional coordinator to support net advocate growth. FY 25/26
- Budget accordingly to hire one supervisor for every five new coordinators based on net advocate growth. TBD

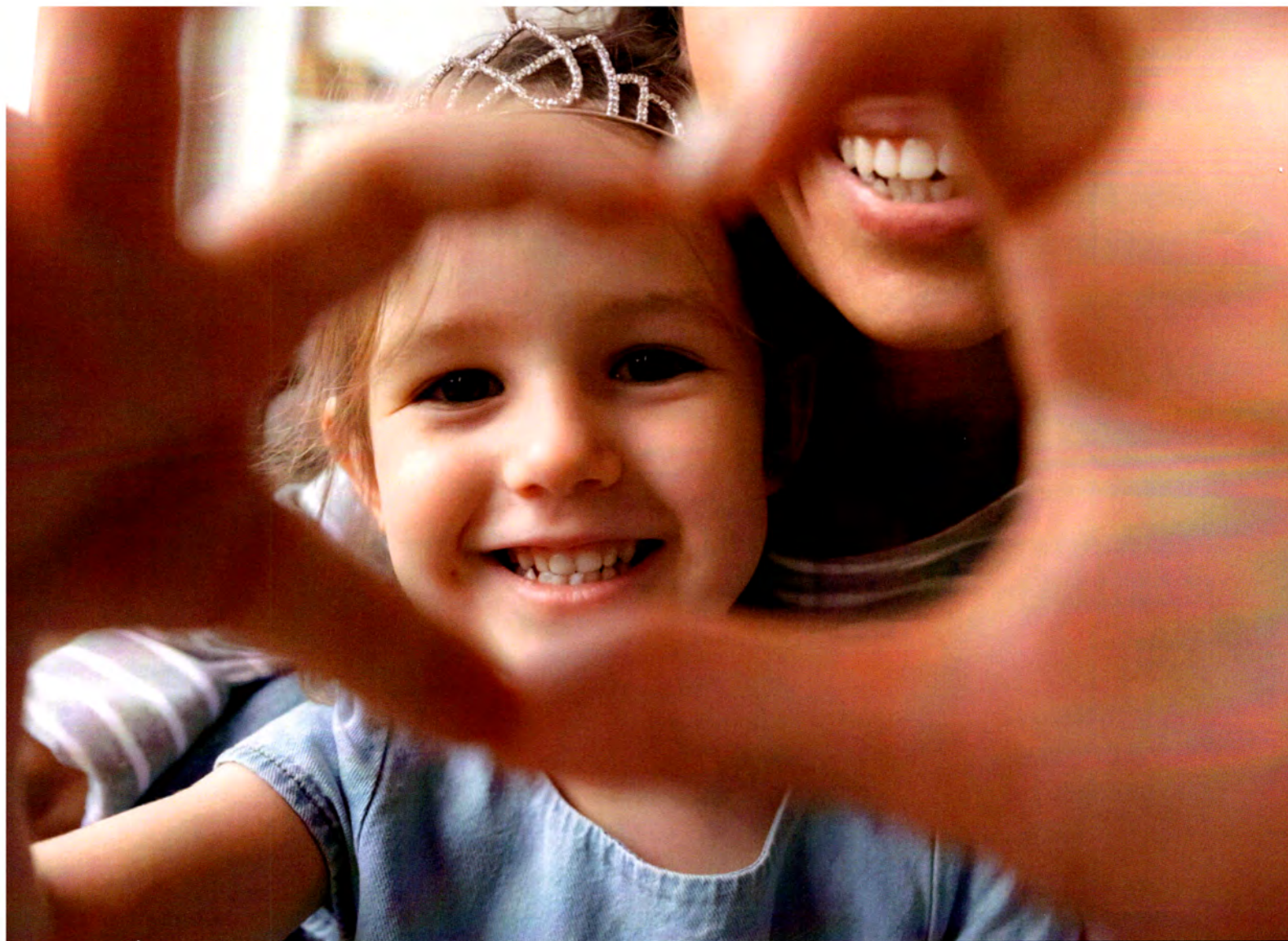
## Strategy 3 - Retain our advocates.

### Actions

- Begin recording advocate questions, concerns, and requests for review at monthly management meetings. Jul 2024
- Survey advocates annually to analyze the root causes affecting advocate turnover. Sept 2024
- Develop and implement an advocate retention plan and track its effectiveness annually. Jan 2025
- Create an Advocate Relations Communication Campaign to consistently connect and deepen relationships. Jan 2025







## GOAL 2 - Measure CASA's impact.

CASA of Fresno and Madera Counties' goal is to be a guiding voice that empowers children and youth to plan for a future that is more hopeful than their past. To ensure we have a high rate of success, CASA of Fresno and Madera Counties will focus on continuous improvement by measuring the impact of its advocate training program and case management data. Additionally, anonymous pre- and post surveys will be conducted of the children and youth served to provide personal insights and stories of success.







## GOAL 2 - Measure CASA's impact.

### Strategy 1 - Implement Journey of Hope training.

#### Actions

- Complete and publish the JOH curriculum for ages 0-5, 6-12, 13-18, and 18+. Jan 2025
- Build and conduct JOH training with all advocates and staff twice per year. Apr 2025
- Establish goals and timelines for advocates to complete the JOH score cards. Feb 2025

### Strategy 2 - Launch a Case Management System.

#### Actions

- Research online case management systems or design a platform. Dec 2024
- Budget this expense and seek funding to defray the cost. Jul 2025
- Develop and begin training on the new system. Jul 2025
- Create a monthly dashboard and annual trend reports to track program data. Jan 2025

### Strategy 3 - Capture stories of impact.

#### Actions

- Develop a method for archiving mission moments. Oct 2024
- Develop pre- and post surveys to collect evidence of impact. Jan 2025
- Develop and implement training on how to collect testimonials (video and written) and conduct pre- and post surveys. Jan 2025





## GOAL 3 - Advocate for positive foster care systems change.

CASA of Fresno and Madera Counties has the advantage of seeing the big picture of a child's journey in foster care. When a child or youth is appointed to an advocate volunteer, CASA staff receives the individual's case file from the court. Each file provides an intimate and comprehensive description of the personal challenges faced over time. These insights will enable CASA of Fresno and Madera Counties to form a collective view of the barriers and opportunities for improving the foster care system. Interpreting anonymous personal information and sharing what is learned with our community and strategic partners has the potential to positively affect systems change.





## GOAL 3 - Advocate for foster care systems change.

### Strategy 1 - Interpret data to improve decision making.

#### Actions

- |   |          |
|---|----------|
| • Collect and begin interpreting case file data to develop an understanding of the chronic and system issues faced. | Jan 2025 |
| • Share key data with stakeholders to highlight opportunities for innovative system solutions.                      | Ongoing  |

### Strategy 2 - Enrich foster care partner discussions.

#### Actions

- |  |         |
|--|---------|
| • Continue to share insights and anonymous stories to advance advocacy.  | Ongoing |
| • Continue to participate in and convene community discussions such as Network Improvement Committee, Fresno County Standardized and Oversight Committee, Fresno and Madera Interagency Councils, and foster care roundtables. | Ongoing |
| • Continue to participate in court Improvement meetings to convey challenges and remedies for children in foster care.   | Ongoing |
| • Continue to educate local and state elected officials about foster care system challenges.   | Ongoing |







## GOAL 4 - Diversify and increase sustainable revenue sources.

The foster care system is a known pipeline to incarceration, homelessness, and mental health crises and solving these system issues costs taxpayers millions of dollars every year. An investment in CASA of Fresno and Madera Counties has positively changed the trajectory of thousands of children, youth and their families leading to a more promising future for Fresno and Madera County communities. This mission is worthy of generous private and public support. To serve more vulnerable children and youth in foster care, a well-communicated financial picture will help us identify gaps and opportunities for attracting new sources of revenue from individuals, corporations, foundations, nonprofits, and government. To ensure a strong and loyal base of financial support, our staff and board will become Gratitude Experts.







## GOAL 4 - Diversify and increase sustainable revenue sources.

### Strategy 1 - Communicate financial picture.

#### Actions

- Complete migration to DonorPerfect Customer Relations Management System. Jul 2024
- Create DonorPerfect related workflows and philanthropic dashboard for monthly reporting. Jan 2025
- Expand DonorPerfect workflows to include events, acquisition, and solicitation marketing. Mar 2025
- Prepare 3-year financial projection and update annually. Jul 2024
- Analyze the net return on events/activities annually. Jul 2024

### Strategy 2 - Increase donations (unrestricted and restricted).

#### Actions

- Develop a comprehensive pipeline of giving including annual, major and planned giving. Sep 2024
- Develop a case statement to inspire giving. Sep 2024
- Submit an annual development plan and budget. Mar 2025
- Compile event sponsorship materials annually. Jan 2025
- Identify grant and foundation opportunities and track deliverables in DonorPerfect. Ongoing
- Determine government and grant funding as a % of total operating revenue. Jul 2024

### Strategy 3 - Become Gratitude Experts.

#### Actions

- Create a donor stewardship plan focused on impact and developing relationships across the organization. Jan 2025
- Build board and community relationships to open doors to potential donors, partners, and organizations. Ongoing



# CASA

## GOAL 5 - Maximize staff potential through wellness, efficient practices, and core values.

The success of CASA of Fresno and Madera Counties has always relied on a healthy, productive, professionally fulfilled and aligned team. Understanding that advocating for children and youth in foster care can be emotionally impactful, CASA of Fresno and Madera Counties encourages rejuvenation at home and at work. At work, wellness education and activities will continue to emphasize self-care and add to our vibrant culture. Professional fulfillment and a sense of belonging will be an all-team responsibility reinforced by embracing our organization's core values.







## GOAL 5 - Maximize staff potential through wellness, efficient practices, and core values.

### Strategy 1 - Build emotional resilience among the team.

#### Actions

- Continue to organize facilitated wellness education. e.g. Yoga, Access to Change, wellness techniques, and promoting Employee Assistance Program. Ongoing
- Organize stress-management activities led by the Journey of Care Committee throughout the year. Ongoing

### Strategy 2 - Cultivate a culture of professional fulfillment.

#### Actions

- Continue to identify opportunities for enhancing work-life harmony. Aug 2024
- Communicate pathways for professional growth. Jul 2025
- Conduct a climate survey every other year to continually strengthen our organization. FY 25/26

### Strategy 3 - Strengthen a sense of belonging.

#### Actions

- Implement a practice for staff to celebrate their “why.” Jul 2024
- Develop interview questions to help identify like-hearted individuals for hire. Ongoing
- Learn from exit interviews and staff retention tracking. Ongoing
- Empower staff to share their ideas, thoughts and views at all team meetings and anonymously as needed. Ongoing
- Identify process roadblocks as needed and work with those involved to find creative solutions. Ongoing
- Integrate core values in staff meetings and annual staff retreats. Jul 2024





# OUR THANKS

In addition to the over 60 participants involved in our community input sessions, we are thankful for the energy, insights, and direction of the following committee members:

## **Strategic Planning Steering Committee**

Wilma Tom Hashimoto – Chair  
Erika Aguilar, Staff  
Ed Avila, Advocate  
Jeff Dal Cerro, Board Member  
Natalie Feil, Staff  
Dan Griffin, Board Member  
Pamela Hancock, Fresno County  
Superintendent of Schools  
Jammy Harris, Former Foster Youth  
Angi Martinez, Staff  
Steve Merrill, Advocate  
Diane O'Canto, Staff  
Denise O'Canto, Staff  
Rick Porter, Staff  
Lisa RochaDanks, Staff  
Mitch Shaw, Advocate  
Karen Sperling, Author and Speaker  
Susan Wilke, Lennar Homes  
Jasmine Virk, Hands-on Central  
California VIP  
Hayley Vuola, Staff

## **Members of Subcommittees**

Erika Aguilar, Staff  
Michal Chrissakis, Archer & Hound Advertising  
Jeff Dal Cerro, Board Member  
Natalie Feil, Staff  
Marilu Garcia, Staff  
Dan Griffin, Board Member  
Iris Her, Staff  
Wilma Tom Hashimoto, Staff, Goal 3 Chair  
Catherine Huerta, Consultant for the County  
Department of Social Services  
Nicole Leisle, Marketing Consultant  
Angi Martinez, Staff, Goal 5 Chair  
Maria Mayes, Owner of Take 5 and  
Health/Wellness Coach  
Karen Sperling, Author and Speaker  
Kerry McGuire, Staff  
Steve Merrill, Advocate  
Diane O'Canto, Staff, Goal 1 Co-chair  
Denise O'Canto, Staff  
Lori Ong, Board  
Rick Porter, Staff, Goal 4 Chair  
Lisa RochaDanks, Staff, Goal 2 Chair  
Angelica Romero, Staff  
Jasmine Virk, Hands-on Central California VIP,  
Goal 1 Co-chair  
Hayley Vuola, Staff  
Susan Wilke, Lennar Homes





# SPECIAL THANKS

## **Board of Directors**

Ivonne Der Torosian, President

Roxanne Braswell, Vice President

Paulo A. Soares, Treasurer

Jeff Dal Cerro, Secretary

Andrea Benson

Michelle Clark

Dan Griffin, Ph.D.

Greg Miskulin

Lori Ong

Rob Poythress

Daniel Scroggins

Ben Torchia

Rich Wendt

Wilma Tom Hashimoto, ex officio





# CHAMPION FOR EVERY CHILD

**Together, we can champion every child.**

**SUPPORT CASA OF FRESNO & MADERA COUNTIES:**

**BECOME A CASA VOLUNTEER!** Be a steady, guiding voice and enhance your life by becoming an Advocate today.

**MAKE A TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATION,** stock transfer or estate gift so more children and youth in foster care can have an Advocate by their side.

**JOIN CASA's SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORK** at Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram and via CASA F.A.M.

*CASA of Fresno & Madera Counties is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization (IRS Tax ID #77-0401361) and all donations are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law.*





COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES  
**The Voice That Empowers Foster Youth**  
FRESNO & MADERA COUNTIES

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