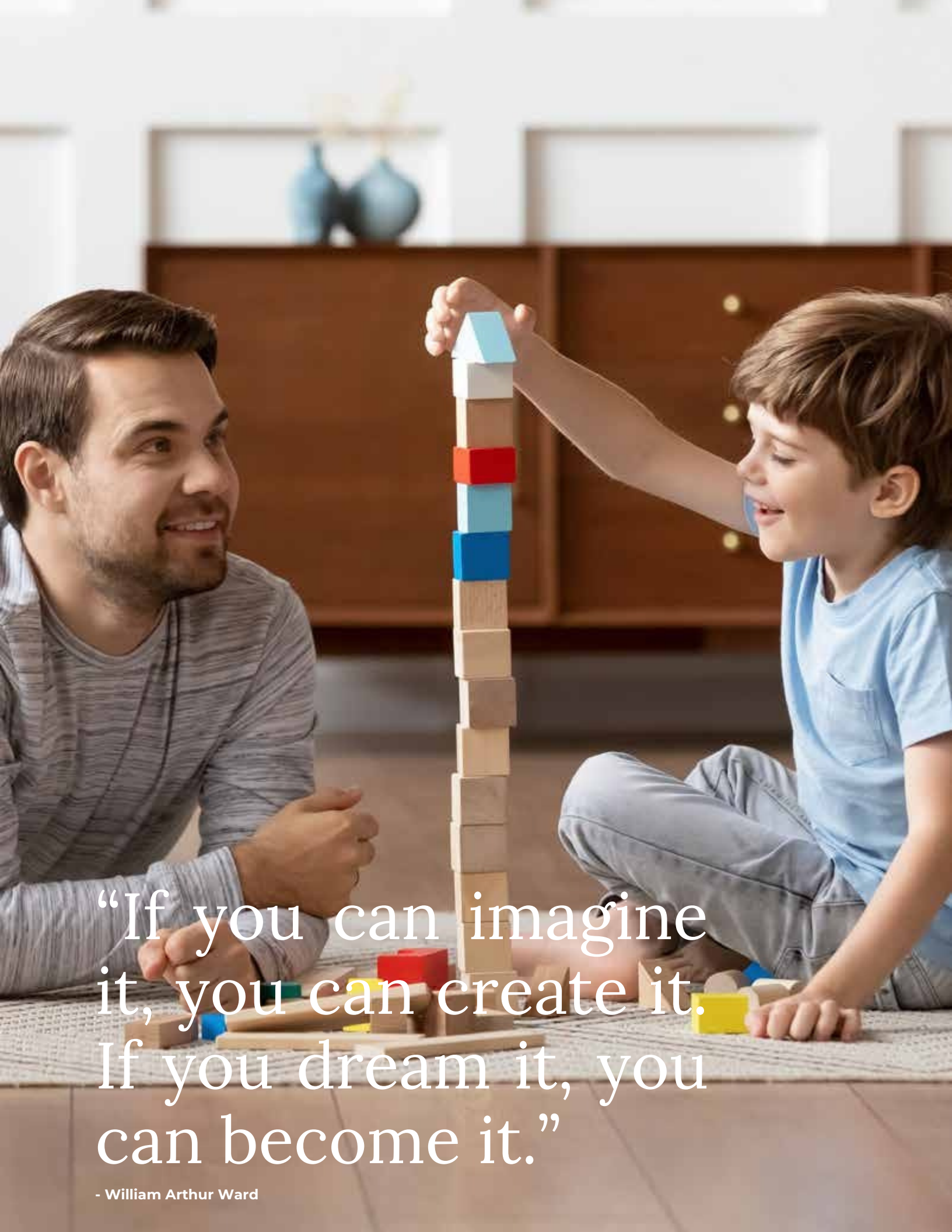




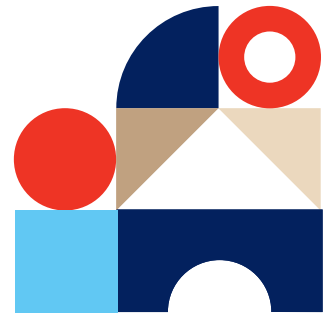
CASA of San Benito County  
***Our 2023 Recap***

Every Child Needs  
A Champion.



“If you can imagine  
it, you can create it.  
If you dream it, you  
can become it.”

- William Arthur Ward



Dear Friends,

The 2023 year was a year full of change. Through this time, the CASA team, including our dedicated staff, board members, and volunteers, is unwavering in our commitment to promoting the well-being, academic success, and overall welfare of the children, youth, and young adults in San Benito County's dependency care system.

Esther Curtice, Executive Director retired on July 31, after 16 years of being in the position. She is also the founder of CASA of San Benito County and continues to support our program. We are forever grateful for all the work she did and the impact she had in so many children's lives.

We are immensely proud of our CASA volunteers, who tirelessly attended court hearings, provided essential school support, nurtured the self-esteem of their assigned youth, and served as a source of strength during challenging moments. Collectively, they provided over 1,500 volunteer hours, demonstrating grace and fortitude in their service to these young lives. Our CASA staff team was equally committed to recruiting, training, and supporting our active volunteers, who consistently offer compassion, guidance, advocacy, and information that our children could rely on.

The ongoing support of our individual, corporate, and foundation contributors continues to be the driving force behind our mission. Our efforts to raise funds and engage with our local communities has enabled us to recruit qualified volunteers and expand our capacity to serve more foster youth. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our community, our donors, board of directors, and philanthropic partners for their generosity, which helps sustain the resources necessary for youth education, cultural and artistic expression, and athletic activities. To our supporters and partners who stand up for CASA of San Benito County children and youth in foster care—the work you do is vital, and your generosity is truly appreciated. Your steadfast support serves as a source of inspiration. Thank you for being there for us!

With heartfelt gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'RS' or similar initials, written over a white background.

Rosy Segura, Executive Director  
CASA of San Benito County

## OUR MISSION

CASA of San Benito County's mission is to train and support community volunteers who advocate for abused or neglected children placed in foster care; upholding the children's rights while pursuing a safe and permanent home.

# CASA: A Foundation of Advocacy. A Beacon of Hope.

A Court Appointed Special Advocate (“CASA”) is a trained volunteer who dedicates between 10 to 15 hours a month to help a child who has experienced abuse or neglect. A CASA is one caring adult, assigned to the same child while they’re in the foster care system ... even if the child’s caregivers, schools, and other situations change. CASA volunteers work together with a child’s family of origin, foster family, social workers, attorneys, therapists, and CASA program staff to build a long-term support network. They help kids plan for a future that’s more hopeful than their past.

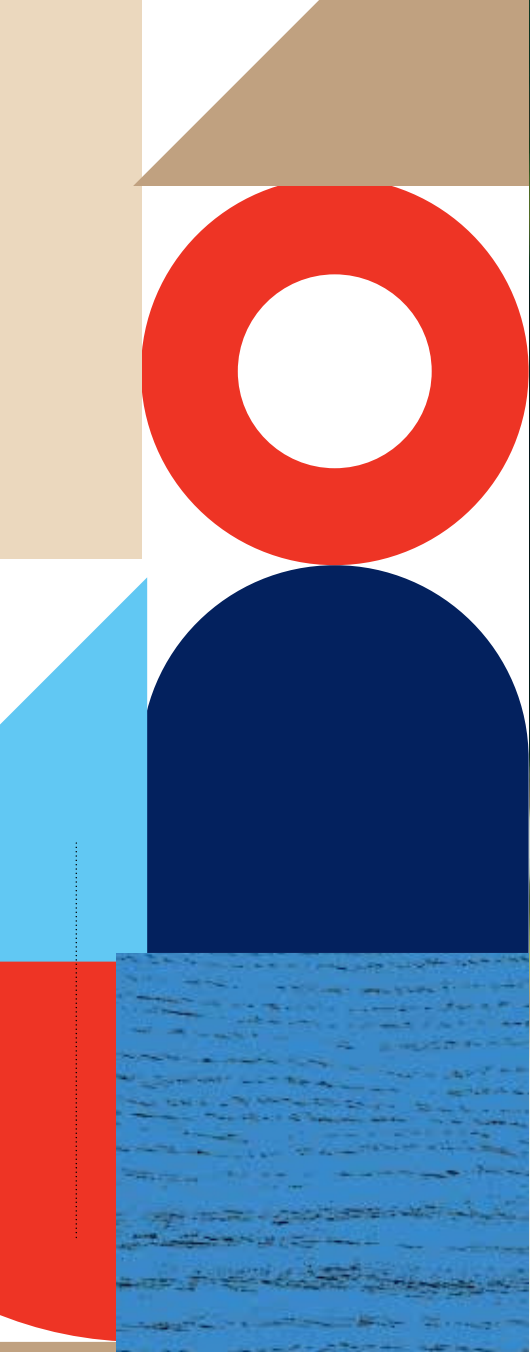
After thorough training, CASAs are appointed by a judge in a local court to advocate for a child and their family, with ongoing supervision from professionals at local nonprofit CASA programs. CASAs bring a unique dedication to children, families, and communities. They recognize that permanency is essential to a child’s well-being, that wherever safe and possible, they work to reunite families, and they keep children connected to their cultural identity and family of origin.

On average, it costs only \$4,000 a year to provide a trained, supervised CASA volunteer to a child in foster care – a small investment in what could be a lifetime of impact.

**“We all face adversities in life, some more than others, and sometimes we need someone to set a good example, walk with us, be a force for beneficial change, make a positive impact, provide guidance – give a little help to overcome those hardships. This resonates with me because when I was younger I needed those things too. So I decided to volunteer as a CASA because I want to help provide some of that goodness in a foster child’s life.”**

**- MALLORY SCHMITT, CASA VOLUNTEER**





## CASA VOLUNTEERS:

**SPEAK UP** for the best interests of the child.

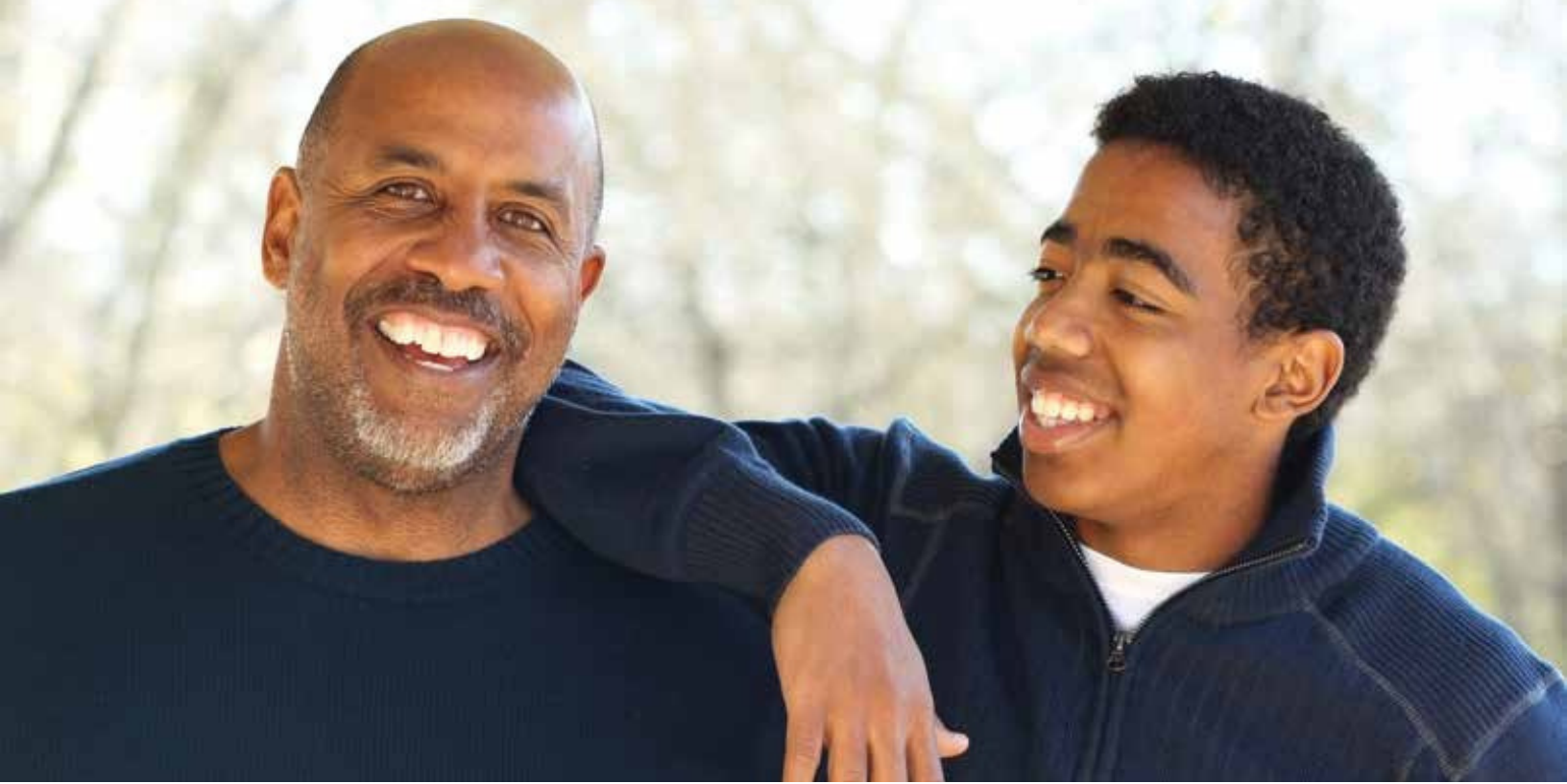
**BUILD RESILIENCY** and reduce the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) by providing support and stability.

**LISTEN TO WHAT A CHILD SAYS** about their education, mental and physical health, and home environment.

**TAKE ACTION** to ensure the safety and well-being of the child, now and in the future.

**SHARE THE NEEDS OF THE CHILD** with other caregivers and the court.

Every child needs a champion to appreciate them, support them, build up their confidence, and encourage them to pursue their dreams. Every CASA can be that champion.



## Spotlight Stories

Jacob, 4 years old, was removed from his home after his mother had given birth to his infant brother, who was born tox-positive. Shortly thereafter, Jacob was assigned to his CASA, “Mr. Ray”. With the children placed in safe, caring homes, mom had been offered substance abuse and counseling services to address her chronic issues. Prior to meeting Mr. Ray, Jacob never had a strong, positive, or consistent male role model in his life. The two visited on a regular basis, often visiting parks, making trips to the local ice cream shop for a treat, and splashing around in Jacob’s kiddie pool. In addition, to their fun outings, Mr. Ray also maintained regular communication with Jacob’s caregiver and monitored the case plan closely. After many ups and downs, his mother was successful in overcoming her addiction, and after nearly 24 months, the case closed, with Jacob reunifying with his mother.

Tanya is a smart, funny, and sassy young woman who has not had an easy life. Spending the vast majority of it in foster care. However, Tanya had a caring and patient CASA to count on. Tanya successfully graduates high school with honors and has almost completed her senior year at a 4-year university with a 2.5 GPA. Contributing to this young lady’s success is the constant encouragement and support she received from her CASA. Transitioning to college was extremely difficult for Tanya, but her CASA made sure she was connected with the on campus foster youth support group and was accessing additional services. Tanya and her CASA continue to have a relationship today, two years after the case closed.

Alex entered foster care and was assigned a CASA in September 2018 at the age of 7. He is a sweet, caring young man, who loves reading and dinosaurs. Unfortunately, Alex had been deemed “unwanted” when he became one of three siblings who has not immediately adopted; but fortunately, his grandmother took him in. Although they lived on a very limited budget, Alex was in a safe and loving placement. CASA has been a great resource to the family, especially when Alex’s grandmother received an eviction notice right before the holidays. The CASA assisted in searching for rentals and locating additional resources for the family so they could enjoy a happy holiday together. Alex was adopted by his grandma, and the CASA worked with the family until the case closed.

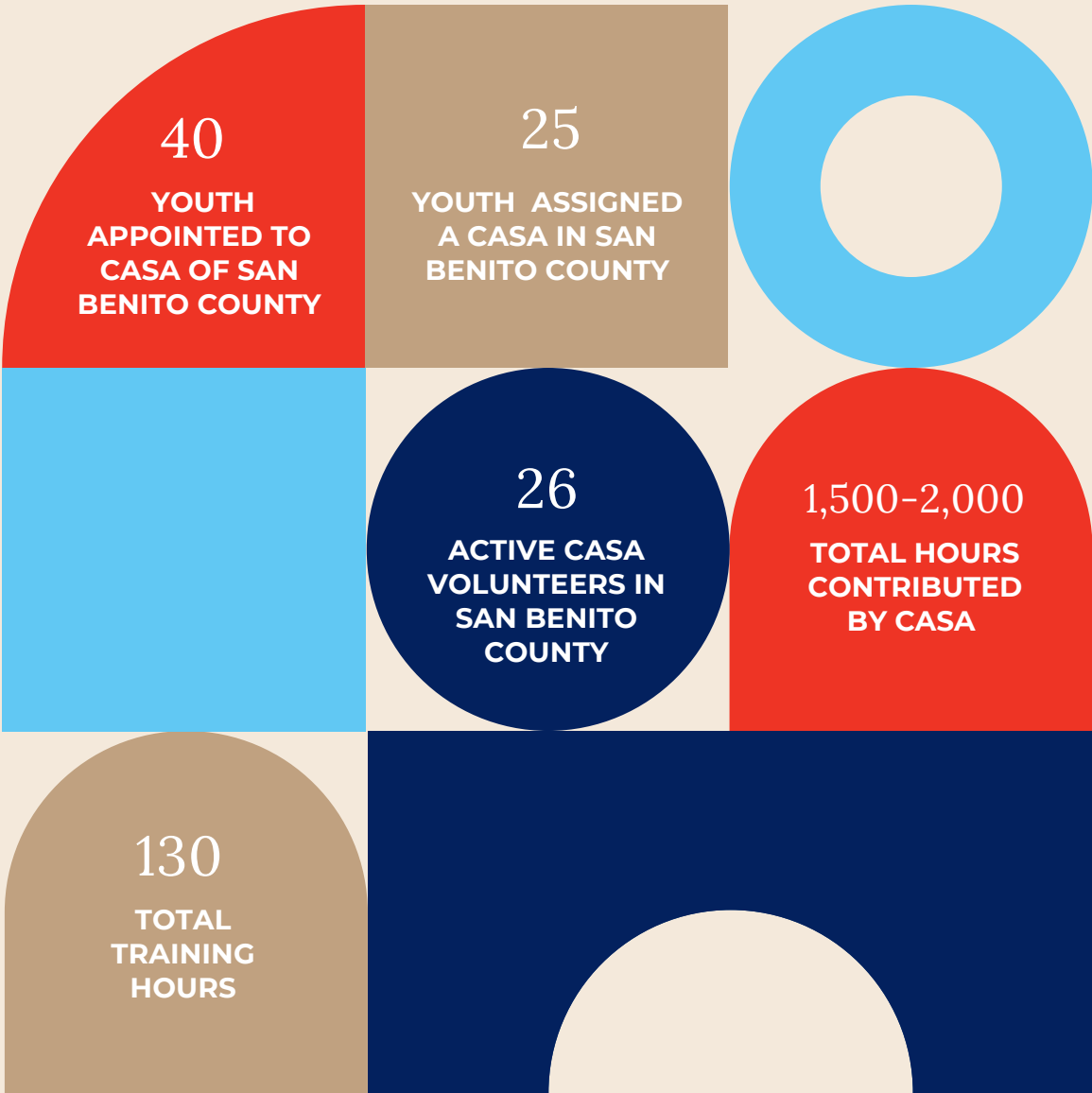
The Cristobal family came into the foster care system for a multitude of reasons. Samantha originally signed on to work with two of the five children, but quickly became an advocate for the whole family. She became an indispensable resource for the children and their mother, despite many challenges they faced, including a language and cultural barrier. Samantha was a true champion for the family. She ensured they were receiving necessary services, and often provided tutoring and educational support, transportation and additional assistance for the family. She was consistent, reliable, and always went above and beyond the call of duty. After two and a half years, the children have successfully reunified with their mother and exited the Juvenile Dependency System.

\*Names have been changed for confidentiality

# Building a Stable Future

At CASA of San Benito County, we hold a fundamental belief in the profound impact of shaping young lives, recognizing it as the cornerstone for a resilient and promising collective future. Since 2013, our mission is to train and support community volunteers who advocate for abused or neglected children placed in foster care; upholding the children's rights while pursuing a safe and permanent home. Advocates are caring volunteers who are committed to providing a voice for the most vulnerable youth in our community: foster children. The role of the volunteer advocate is to ensure the child's safety and well-being, as well as the physical, emotional, and educational needs are met during one of the most difficult times in their lives.

## BY THE NUMBERS



# The Need

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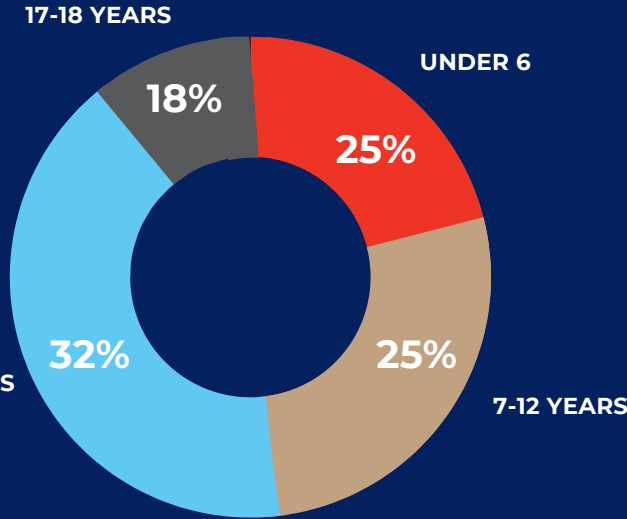
There are approximately 60 youth currently in San Benito County's Juvenile Dependency System. With changes in living situations, communities, and schools, foster children rarely have consistent adults in their lives. A CASA advocate serves as that constant adult and meets with the child regularly to afford greater attention to their needs and desires. It is known children need deeper connections to their community. Unfortunately, siblings removed from the home are at times placed separately from each other. A CASA works to bring these children together on a consistent basis. Advocates will facilitate connections in the community; make certain sibling and parent visits are taking place, connect children with appropriate resources, and support the team from the Health and Human Services Department in prioritizing the needs of the children. Join our efforts as we work to connect all children in foster care in San Benito County with an advocate who is a voice of hope.



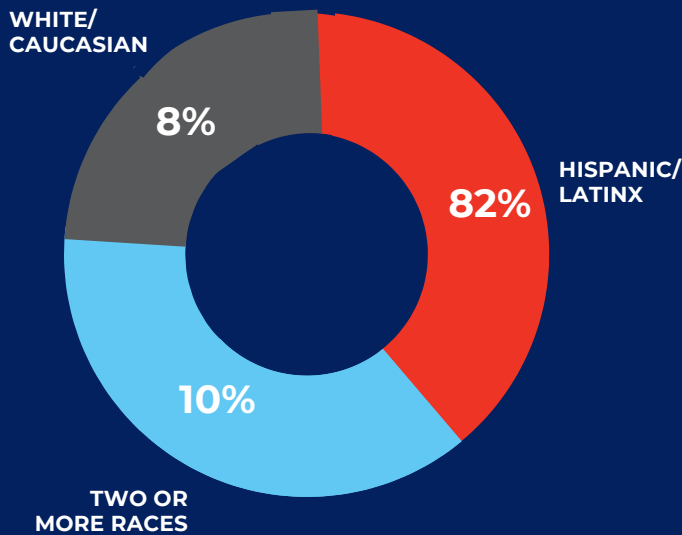


# WHO WE SERVE

## Age



## Ethnicity



In 2023, 65% of youth served were female.



## How to Help our Foster Youth

CASA Volunteers can make all the difference for San Benito County foster youth. Volunteers frequently establish enduring connections that extend into prosperous adulthood, showcasing the significant impact an individual can have in bringing about tangible change. We rely on local nonprofits, churches, organizations, and businesses to find and recruit new volunteers. The impact of your support significantly influences the lives of foster youth in San Benito County.

### MAKE A DIRECT TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATION,

a stock transfer, a gift through your employer's matching gift program, or an estate gift.

### ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO SUPPORT

CASA with charitable donations.

### BECOME A CASA VOLUNTEER!

Visit our website, [www.casasanbenito.org](http://www.casasanbenito.org)

### SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT CASA

to your colleagues, friends, and family.

### JOIN OUR ONLINE SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORK

on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram.

CASA of San Benito County is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization (IRS Tax I.D. #45-2881517) and all donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

# With Thanks

Our heartfelt thanks go out to the supporters and community organizations who joined forces with us this year, generously contributing in-kind donations for our foster youth. CASA of San Benito County relies on the continuous backing of individuals and organizations to ensure no child in our community faces challenges alone. Your support is invaluable, thank you!

Clark Family Fund  
California Giant Berry Farms  
Duncan Lemmon  
Sara Steiner  
Seneca  
Hollister Exchange Club  
Mary Kay Filice  
Taylor Farms  
Tiffany Family Fund  
Richard W. Shelton Insurance  
The Hollister Rotary Club  
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David & Kathy Kessler  
Nashotah Management Inc.  
Saul Ferreyra  
Adrian Ochoa  
Sofia Segura  
Dana Hanson  
Roy & Libby Sims  
Emmaus House  
Jillian Wilson  
Scott Kindred  
Community Foodbank of SBC  
Woodstock Pizza  
Heavenly Bakery  
Giorgio's Italian Food & Pizzeria



Paine's Restaurant & Bar  
 Six Flags Discovery Kingdom  
 Morgan Winery  
 Elkhorn Slough Safari  
 Lion Ranch Vineyards & Winery  
 San Francisco of Modern Art  
 Portola Hotel and Spa  
 Bayonet & Black Horse Golf Club  
 The Tech Interactive  
 Bolado Park Event Center  
 Tahoe Donner Association  
 J. McLaughlin, Carmel By The Sea  
 Casa De Fruta  
 Round Table Pizza  
 Big Paw Olive Oil  
 The Garden Shoppe  
 Byington Vineyard & Winery  
 In-N-Out Burger  
 Balletto Vineyards  
 O'Neill yacht Charters  
 Olio e Limone, Olio Crudo Bar & Olio Pizzeria  
 DeRose Winery  
 Princess Monterey Whale Watching  
 San Jose Giants  
 Hahn Family Wines  
 Marich Confectionery  
 Monterey Bay Whale Watch  
 Winchester Mystery House  
 Oakland A's Community Fund  
 Kirigin Cellars  
 Kayak Connection  
 Jardine's de San Juan  
 Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco  
 Adventures by the Sea  
 Doug Steakley Photography

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Blanca Stransky	Kylie Tisdale
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Elena Verdegaal	Peter Benjamin-Kehoe
Esther Curtice	Sue Redmond
Frida Benjamin	Susan Drawve
Graciela Brewer	Wilma Vermilyer

## Staff

Rosy Segura, **Executive Director**

Olivia Tauvinkl, **Case Supervisor**

Zoe Martinez, **Social Media & Admin.**

**Coordinator**



**CASA OF SAN BENITO COUNTY**

440 San Benito St.  
Hollister, CA 95023  
(831) 637-4992

[www.casasanbenito.org](http://www.casasanbenito.org)



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CASA of San Benito County is a member of the National CASA/GAL Association and the California CASA Association.

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