JULY

Court Appointed Special Advocates of Mendocino & Lake Counties

"WE are for the child"

CASA
Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

Member of the National CASA Association

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We are abandoning children in foster care
By Rita Soronen

3.3 MILLION CHILDREN — 251,764 PLACED IN THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM — WE PROMISED A BETTER LIFE: SAFETY FAMILY HOME — 23,439

1 in 5 WILL BECOME HOMELESS AFTER AGE 18 | ONLY 1/2 WILL BE EMPLOYED AT 24 | <3% WILL EARN A COLLEGE DEGREE | 71% OF YOUNG WOMEN WILL BE PREGNANT BY AGE 21 | 1 in 4 WILL EXPERIENCE PTSD

(CNN) -- In 2012 in the United States, 23,439 children in foster care turned 18 and were "emancipated" or "aged out." In simple terms, most of them were put out into the world on their own without housing, financial assistance or emotional support.

Take Adrian, now 27. After being placed into foster care at 6 because of his mother's drug and alcohol abuse, he stayed in care, moving from home to home, until he was 18 and too old for the system. He found the strength to try to put himself through college, using the county van his caseworker helped secure to move there.
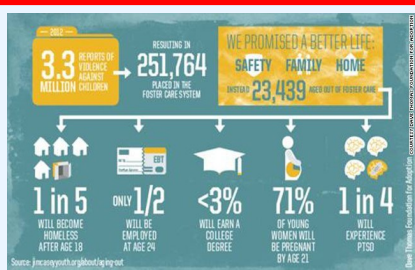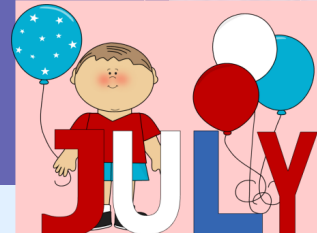
Abandoning

Call 463-6503, visit us at www.mendocinocasa.org or find us on Facebook for more information about the many ways to VOLUNTEER with CASA of Mendocino & Lake Counties.

The American Bar Association's Parent Attorney Project celebrates parents' accomplishments in safely reunifying with children in foster care. Here is one story by James X Sumrow…

A Step in My Direction

When I despaired, people's kindness helped me find my way back to my children.

My kids were taken into custody in 2007. I was using meth and selling also.

I never, ever wanted to hurt my kids. I thought I loved them with all my heart.

At the time, Jayme was 2 and Sheryl was 3. My kids loved to be with me. I rode a bike with a trailer attached to the back that the kids loved to ride in. They would cry when I went somewhere by myself.

But I was also using every day.

Reunited

CASA of Mendocino & Lake Counties

trains and supports caring adult volunteer mentors & Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) to connect and advocate for foster youth, former foster youth, delinquent and at-risk youth.

Are you interested in becoming a CASA volunteer but you're in need of more information? Join us at one of our monthly OPEN HOUSES to learn more about CASA and pick up an application. Open Houses are held every 2nd Thursday of the month, from noon to 1 p.m. at the CASA Office at 327 N. State St., S-204 in Ukiah. To attend please R.S.V.P. by calling 707-489-5346 or emailing Sheryn at shildebrand@mendocinocasa.org

Our neighboring Marin County CASA program shares this inspiring video about a former foster youth and her CASA Volunteer

My CASA is always there for me.

I can do anything…

Make a difference in a child's life.

Become a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)

Cherish was five when she was matched with her CASA advocate Mona. She had been brutally abused, and had no healthy parental figure, which resulted in her use of foul language, tantrums (including while she was with her advocate), and physical aggression. She was expelled from kindergarten for knocking over the principal who had leaned down to talk to her.

Her advocate, who knew that she was very bright, visited multiple schools in an attempt to find the perfect teacher to deal with Cherish – someone who could see past the behaviors to her amazing potential. Mona also helped find a single woman who was willing to adopt Cherish even with all the challenges she presented. The advocate continued to work with Cherish and support her to ensure the adoption was successful. Cherish could have been relegated to moving from school to school, foster home to foster home, from therapist to therapist, but Mona would not permit that to happen to this girl with amazing potential, despite her out-of-control behavior.

Cherish is now a happy 17-year-old and remains in her adoptive home, due to the faith and efforts of her CASA advocate.