



AL (Advocate Link) is Changing... for the Better!

We've heard your feedback (and couldn't agree more!) so we're very excited to announce we are moving to a much shorter quarterly survey from the current monthly survey. The new survey and quarterly format better capture the relationship based advocacy work done by you all, and, wait for it: has been reduced to 15 (FIFTEEN) questions from 35!

We anticipate rolling out this change in early March. And we'll be sure to share important tips to help make this transition as smooth as we can for you. For the time being please continue to submit your activity logs on a timely basis so that we may meet our reporting requirements to the Judicial Council of California, the oversight body for all CASA programs in our state. Should you have questions or comments at this time, please email or call our Program Director, Erika Dirkse at Erika@sfcasa.org and (415) 398-8001 x106.

2020 Fostering Change Gala: Futures in Bloom Tickets now on sale!

Join us on April 24th for an inspiring evening to support our youth. Advocates get a 50% discount on up to two tickets with the code CASAGALA2020. Get tickets today at www.sfcasa.org/gala. Tickets and tables are selling out fast!

Help Build Awareness About the Crisis in Our Foster Care System

SFCASA recently applied for the SF Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development Grant and were not selected among their initial recommendations. Please consider sending a public comment email to the Mayor's office or attend the public meeting to encourage more support for the youth being placed outside San Francisco. **You can find suggested language and detailed instructions [here](#).**

CASA Community Network Committee Update

Thank you to all of those who attended our first event, the Goal Setting & Happy Hour CE at Alchemist Bar and Lounge! (Thank you to volunteers De Moore and Tara Soltow for pulling it off!) The CASA Community Network is created by CASAs and for CASAs, with the mission to plan and organize CASA volunteer-led events designed to promote social connections within the CASA community, provide peer support for CASA volunteers, increase CE opportunities, and boost CASA retention and recruitment efforts. **If you are interested in being part of planning future events, we will be having our next committee meeting in March—look out for announcement emails in February!** If you have already indicated interest, please know that as soon as the date is set you will be the first to know! You can contact Jackie at jackie@sfcasa.org for more information.

Spread the Word!

We are recruiting for SFCASA's spring training from 04/28/2020 to 06/02/2020. Please help us match more youth on the waitlist by sharing this [link](#) to sign up for our info sessions.

Support your Youth during Tax Season!

If your youth has a simple tax return (earned \$66,000 or less), they can do their taxes for free online. File free online through United Way's [MyFreeTaxes](#) program.

Tinkering School Workshops

Does your youth want to learn how to create fun projects using wood, metal, and cardboard? [Tinkering School](#) is offering a monthly building class for **queer youth (ages 8 and up)**. Their upcoming workshop dates are February 16, March 22, April 19, and May 17 from 10-4 pm. CASAs are welcome to attend the class as well! There is a cost associated with each class, but scholarships may be available, please contact our Program Assistant, Christina Lee, at christina@sfcasa.org for more information.

Upcoming CE Opportunities

Earn CE Credit by Attending SFUSD Community Meetings

SFUSD is holding a series of meetings for community members to share their thoughts on changes to school enrollment and we need CASAs in attendance to ensure that the voices of students in foster care are not lost in the process! You can read more about the planning behind proposed changes [here](#). For 3 CE hours, please attend one of [these community meetings](#), speak to the talking points below, and then send a brief reflection write up to Diane at Training@sfcasa.org. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to our Educational Advocacy Specialist, Mia Regent, at Mia@sfcasa.org.

When speaking in these community meetings, please mention the following:

- Your name, and the fact that you are a Court Appointed Special Advocate for a San Francisco foster youth.
- Briefly highlight a few educational challenges faced by youth in care (average of 2 school changes per year, missing records, enrollment in incorrect classes, etc).
- Request that the Board keep foster youth top of mind as an especially vulnerable student population, and ask that *foster youth have priority enrollment* in the summer as well as throughout the year.

Personal Development: Discovering Your Values and Internal Motivators as a CASA (2 CE credits)

Do you ever wonder about the specific strengths you bring to working with your CASA youth and how you could demonstrate them more consistently? Or, maybe sometimes you wonder about what it is that really motivates you in doing this work? If so, come join Allison Roeser, Life and Leadership Coach and SFCASA Volunteer for a unique Continuing Education session focused on supporting you to empower your youth while bringing more ease to the volunteer experience. We will uncover YOUR strengths and values as a CASA, as well as identify what is most important to you about being a volunteer. You will leave this Personal Development 101 session with practical tools for advocating and navigating challenging situations with your youth that come from your best resource... you!

Tuesday, February 11, 2020 from 6:00 - 8:00 pm at the SFCASA Volunteer Annex Training Space, 2533 Mission Street.

Please register for **Personal Development** by emailing our Training Specialist, Diane Posner at training@sfcasa.org!

CSEC Awareness (3 CE credits)

Come learn the signs to look for in youth who are vulnerable to sexual exploitation with Carly Devlin of Huckleberry Youth Programs. Since young people experiencing the foster care system are particularly at-risk of being targeted, it's important for CASA volunteers to understand the signs and best practices for preventing and responding to sexual exploitation of youth. If you are matched with a youth aged 10 or older, please plan to participate in this important training. Dinner will be provided!

Wednesday, February 26, 2020 from 6:00-9:00 pm at the SFCASA Volunteer Annex Training Space, 2533 Mission Street

Please register for **CSEC Awareness** by emailing our Training Specialist, Diane Posner at training@sfcasa.org!

Juvenile Justice: Help! When a Dependent Comes into Contact with the Juvenile Justice System: What You Need to Know as a CASA (2 CE credits)

Join SFCASA's Juvenile Justice Coordinator, Gabriela Bayol, to build your knowledge around advocating for a dependent who has had contact or is at risk of having contact with the juvenile justice system. Learn the important factors to consider in your role as a CASA for a dependent youth in the early stages of their engagement with juvenile justice partners. We will go over what to expect and how you may best support the youth, with an introduction to dual dependency and juvenile justice systems' advocacy and resources. We will review the key players in the juvenile justice system, who to get in touch with, and how to best partner with the Juvenile Probation Department, our community partners, and your Case Supervisor.

All are welcome!

Wednesday, March 11, 2020 from 6:00-8:00 pm at the SFCASA Volunteer Annex Training Space, 2533 Mission Street

Please register for **Juvenile Justice** by emailing our Training Specialist, Diane Posner at training@sfcasa.org!

Educational Rights Holder Booster Class (2 CE credits)

Calling all Educational Rights Holders! Please join SFCASA Education Specialist Mia Ragent for an evening of educational advocacy "booster" training and discussion. Mia will briefly review educational advocacy basics before transitioning into a round table discussion where ERHs can share their education success tips and ask case-specific questions of Mia and the group. Current ERHs are strongly encouraged to attend, CASAs who are not ERHs are also welcome.

Monday, March 23, 2020 from 6:00-8:00 pm at the SFCASA Volunteer Annex Training Space, 2533 Mission Street.

Please register for **Educational Rights Holder Booster Class** by emailing our Training Specialist, Diane Posner at training@sfcasa.org!

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San Francisco CASA
2535 Mission Street
San Francisco, CA 94110 - United States
Telephone: 415-398-8001

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