

SFCASA News

HAPPY NEW YEAR

2023

January, 2023

**Join SFCASA!**

**Seeking Seasonal, Part-Time (paid)  
Foster Youth Tax Project  
Coordinator or Assistant!**

For the second year SFCASA is partnering with John Burton Advocates for Youth, United Way Bay Area and the IRS to serve as a filing partner in support of current and former foster youth to file their taxes to receive even greater refunds and credits with this year's introduction of the CA Foster Youth Tax Credit!

Learn more about the [Intake Coordinator](#) and [Site Assistant](#) roles and please also share in your networks if you know of someone who could be a great fit for this seasonal, part-time and hybrid role. Reach out to [Erika@sfcasa.org](mailto:Erika@sfcasa.org) with any questions!

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

## CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS. WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Our winter training is just around the corner.  
We are getting ready to train our next class.

Word of mouth from current volunteers has  
been our best recruiting tool by far, so we are  
asking you to please spread the word!

DO YOU KNOW SOMEBODY WHO  
MIGHT WANT TO HELP?

Connect them with our Community Engagement  
Coordinator: [jennifer@sfcasa.org](mailto:jennifer@sfcasa.org)



## Support Financial Justice for Foster Youth: SF Foster Youth Tax Project!

**We are looking for community volunteers to help us provide this free tax service to foster youth during the upcoming tax filing season (February - April 2023).**

- Last year tax project volunteers across six California counties (including San Francisco and SFCASA's site) supported current and former foster youth to realize \$628,538 in total refunds with an average credit/rebate of \$2,789 per filer.
- Beginning in 2023 California's foster youth are eligible for the first in the nation state tax credit for current and former foster youth in the amount up to \$1,000 for those earning at least \$1 and up to \$29,999.
- And, with only 1% of eligible young adults served in CY2022 we cannot wait to realize greater impact in CY2023!

To become a VITA volunteer (in person or virtually), one must first complete the virtual tax preparer training hosted by the United Way Bay Area and pass one of the following open-book certification tests; Basic, Advanced or Qualified Experienced. The volunteer training will be conducted virtually beginning in

January 2023. [Register here to learn more](#) about how you can support getting money in the pockets of foster youth!

**This is a terrific short-term volunteer opportunity, especially for those with business and finance backgrounds and interests. Please share in your network and ask that anyone who submits the form to please indicate “SFCASA” in the “How You Heard” section.**

Thank you and hope you can join us in 2023!

## New Year, New Stories to Share!

As we begin the new year, we are looking to collect stories about special moments or memories you've had with your foster youth. [This link will take you to a Google Form](#) where you can share. Please note that we would like to use some of these stories in promotional materials for CASA but we will never share them until we contact you first and a marketing consultant will work with you to ensure both confidentiality and content accuracy before use. As you fill out the form, all we ask is that you speak from the heart... and please also be sure to leave your email so that we can contact you.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Holiday Gift Pick-up

Please come by the SFCASA office by **January 13th** to pick up your requested holiday gift for your youth! After the 13th gifts will be put back into our holiday gift rotation for next year.

Please plan to come by between 9am-5pm. If you have questions about gift pick up, please contact your Case Supervisor.

### SFCASA Town Hall

Save the Date for the next SFCASA Town Hall on **February 13th, 2023 from 6-7:30PM**. You will hear from SFCASA staff about the first 6 months of strategic plan implementation as well as learn about what is coming up for the rest of the year. More details shared in the January newsletter. Register [HERE](#)

# SFCASA Fostering Change Gala 2023

Save the Date and plan to join us for our Fostering Change Gala on Friday, **April 28th, 2023**. As an advocate, you're entitled to 50% off on up to 2 tickets. Just use the code **CASALOVE50** at [www.sfcasa.org/gala](http://www.sfcasa.org/gala) to reserve your tickets. Please contact Maggie Swanson at [maggie@sfcasa.org](mailto:maggie@sfcasa.org) if you'd like to reserve more than 2 tickets.



## \* Advocate Spotlight \*



When she matched with NB over three years ago, Stacey thought being a CASA would be relatively straightforward. She was partnered with an ERH for extra educational support, and NB was living in San Francisco. Little did she know that in the next three years she would be supporting NB through 7 placement changes, including a congregate care facility in So Cal, and long periods of homelessness and harm.

Stacey has lived into the SFCASA motto of “keep showing up”. While she has experienced doubts, disappointments and real concern for NB’s safety, all while managing a full personal and professional life, Stacey has been steadfast in her advocacy and commitment to NB.

Thankfully, NB has recently returned to care and is as stable as they have ever been in the past many years. Stacey has generously transported, visited,

arranged for NB's needs to be met, and advocated for NB in an impactful Court Report. Stacey is also planning a grand milestone birthday part for NB soon, working hard to include NB's family.

From periods of no action while NB was away from care, to seasons of tons of activity when NB had many needs, Stacey has remained committed, caring, empathetic, resourceful, patient (!) and collaborative.

**Hats off to Stacey!**  
**SFCASA Advocate of the Month**

## ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

### Free Dental Clinic for Children

UCSF is now offering a night clinic for dental services! It is a free dental clinic that will run once a month on the first Wednesday of every month.

They plan to offer free dental services to children under the age of 15 that do not have a regular dental provider (dental exams, cleanings, and fluoride varnishes).

### Free Tickets to SF Academy of Sciences

Calling all Science Lovers! One of our fantastic Advocates Rudy, has graciously given 25 free tickets for CASAs and their youth to visit SF Academy of Sciences.

Please contact [programassistant@sfcasa.org](mailto:programassistant@sfcasa.org) to request tickets.

### Free Indoor Rock Climbing and Bouldering Classes for Youth & CASAs!



SFCASA has partnered with **Touchstone Climbing**, an indoor rock climbing gym to offer free classes for CASAs and youth at all locations! Their locations include **San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley, Sacramento, and Fresno.**

Full details available on our website [here](#).

## Free Sports Programs in SF

We are excited about our partnership with **VOLO**. They provide free sports programming to youth in San Francisco that encourages social-emotional learning and character development. Additionally, teaching kids to be active and play sports is a great way to start developing distress tolerance skills. VOLO offers free 6-week sports programs throughout the year. All programs include t-shirts, equipment, staff, and healthy snacks.



VOLO's next set of programs will begin in January 2023. Details surrounding those programs can be found [HERE](#) starting November 10th, 2022.

## Educational Advocacy

### San Francisco Unified School District Offering Free Tutoring

Foster Youth Services Coordinating Program has contracted with Bay Area Educational Institute to provide tutorial services to foster youth attending SFUSD. Tutoring will be provided at the school site during or after-school. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact Ian Enriquez at [enriquezi@sfusd.edu](mailto:enriquezi@sfusd.edu). Apply for tutoring [here](#).

## Transitional Age Youth (TAY) Corner

### SFCASA Peer to Peer Grants

SFCASA's Peer to Peer Grant Program is now open! Grant applications are accepted from the 1<sup>st</sup> of EVERY month to the 15<sup>th</sup> of EVERY month up until April 2023! Grant award amounts are between \$500-\$2500 for system-impacted youth throughout the Bay Area to address needs such as education, transportation, housing, and more!

1. Young people MUST apply on their own (advocates, PSWs, etc. are welcome to support but can NOT apply on the young person's behalf! )
2. Two paragraphs MUST be submitted in the young person's application or it will be denied
3. ALL submitted applications MUST have an invoice to support the amount being requested as youth will NOT be receiving the grant money directly. SFCASA will be paying vendors directly. This means that we will not accept grant applications for smaller requests such as toiletries, clothing, etc. as the funding is a ONE time support and not ongoing.

Please reach out to TAY Coordinator and Case Supervisor, Theodora at [theodora@sfcasa.org](mailto:theodora@sfcasa.org) or 628.867.7373 with any questions!

## Continuing Education for Advocates

### **CSEC SUPPORT GROUP**

Wednesday, January 11th, 2023 at 6:00-8:00pm -In-Person- @ 2533 Mission St. (2 CE credits).

If you serve a youth who is experiencing or at risk of CSEC involvement, please join this unique support group. We know that supporting these youth is hugely challenging for CASAs. During our time together we will focus on supporting and learning from each other, reflection on points of advocacy, identification of next steps and resources.

Register [HERE](#)

### **SOCIAL SKILLS FOR YOUTH: PROMOTING PRO-SOCIAL BEHAVIORS**

Wednesday, January 18th, 2023 at 6-8 PM via Zoom (2 CE Credits) with Dr. Natalia Estassi.

Youth in foster care suffer higher rates of incarceration, high school dropout, homelessness and unemployment. Also, there is a lot of literature examining disparities in medical health, behavioral health and social and economic well-being. Research also suggests that mentoring and social skills training may lead to positive outcomes for various populations of school-aged youth, including foster youth. Discuss and explore strength based strategies to improve outcomes for the youth we serve.

Register [HERE](#)

### **CASA COMMUNITY NETWORK HUDDLE: SHARING RESOURCES THAT YOU KNOW OR HAVE USED**

Monday, January 23, 2023 from 6-7 PM via Zoom (1 CE Credit)

The CASA Community Network (CCN) is a network for CASAs, organized by CASAs and hosted by CASAs. We share, lean in and on, and support each other through events, such as The Huddle. Sometimes we learn from expert guest

speakers in continuing education sessions. In The Huddle we learn from experts – ourselves – we have collective years of expertise among us. We are a network of support – who better understands the ups, the downs, the joys, the challenges than we do.

Based on your suggestions, the January 23, 2023 CASA Community Network Huddle will be about sharing resources. If there is a resource you're wondering about, or if you're eager to share something that's worked lately, we welcome your contribution to this rich conversation to kick off the New Year. We would especially like to encourage CASAs with JJ and/or AB12 involved youth to join this Huddle. We will have special rooms for you to share with each other.

Register [HERE](#)

## **INTEGRATING BOUNDARIES IN THE CASA ROLE ADVOCATES WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

Monday, January 23, 2023 at 6-8 PM via Zoom (2 CE Credits) with Amy Dahlen of Kid Power

Boundary skills enhance communication of all kinds - including communication between professionals and those they serve. Boundary skills also help prevent bullying, abuse, and other harm - and when professionals integrate boundary skills into standard practices, they provide powerful modeling of crucial safety skills for people vulnerable to harm. During this CE we'll explore strategies and methods to use, teach and reinforce skills to model calm, confident, assertive boundary setting with youth and families and set and up hold boundaries more clearly and consistently without being punitive or judgmental.

Register [HERE](#)

## **INTEGRATING BOUNDARIES IN THE CASA ROLE ADVOCATES WORKING WITH TEENS AND YOUNG ADULTS**

Monday, January 30, 2023 at 6-8 PM via Zoom (2 CE Credits) with Amy Dahlen of Kid Power

Boundary skills enhance communication of all kinds - including communication between professionals and those they serve. Boundary skills also help prevent bullying, abuse, and other harm - and when professionals integrate boundary skills into standard practices, they provide powerful modeling of crucial safety skills for people vulnerable to harm. During this CE we'll explore strategies and methods to use, teach and reinforce skills to model calm, confident, assertive boundary setting with youth and families and set and up hold boundaries more clearly and consistently without being punitive or judgmental.

Register [HERE](#)

## **HARM REDUCTION: IT'S NOT JUST FOR RISKY BEHAVIORS**

Wednesday, February 15th, 2023 at 6-8 PM via Zoom (2 CE Credits) with Allison Roeser.

During this CE we'll explore harm reduction as a holistic approach, not only with risky behaviors, but as a way to engage in many different scenarios to help youth process their beliefs, statements and attitudes. Participants will hear real-life examples from other CASAs, highlighting what's worked well and ways that they've used harm reduction to support their youth. Attendees will also have the opportunity to speak with other CASAs about their experiences in small groups,



and will leave with clear next steps for ways to engage using a harm reduction approach.

Register [HERE](#)

## **2023 REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH EQUITY PROJECT CONFERENCE I THINKING OUTSIDE THE SYSTEMS: RE-IMAGINING HEALTHY SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT FOR YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE**

Thursday, February 16th, 2023, 9-5 PM via Zoom (8 Credits) with The Reproductive Health Equity Project for Foster Youth (RHEP)

#RHEPCON23 will bring together an interdisciplinary community to share research, advocacy strategies, tools, stories, arts, and best practices designed to support the healthy sexual development of youth in foster care. Sexual and reproductive health intersects with and influences all aspects of the life of a young person in foster care, including their overall social-emotional wellbeing. No matter what sector you come from – education, workforce, housing, child welfare, health, or advocacy – knowing how to normalize and support the healthy sexual development of young people is an essential aspect of supporting them.

Register [HERE](#)

## **JUVENILE JUSTICE PARTNERS PANEL**

Wednesday February 22<sup>nd</sup> from 6:00m-8:00pm via Zoom (2 CE Credits)

The Juvenile Justice Partners Panel will provide you with a clearer understanding of the roles of the various participants in the delinquency court process, enhanced by examples of how a CASA volunteer may most effectively work with each party to support the best interests and well-being of juvenile justice involved youth. Please join representatives from the Superior Court of San Francisco, the Public Defender's Office, the SF Unified School District, and the SF Juvenile Probation Department.

Register [HERE](#)

## **CASA COMMUNITY NETWORK HUDDLE: VALENTINE'S GET TOGETHER**

Monday, February 27, 2023 from 6:00 to 7:30 PM in person at 2533 Mission St. (Training Annex) (2 CE credits)

The CASA Community Network (CCN) is a network for CASAs, organized by CASAs and hosted by CASAs. We share, lean in and on, and support each other through events, such as The Huddle. Sometimes we learn from expert guest speakers in continuing education sessions. In The Huddle we learn from experts – ourselves – we have collective years of expertise among us. We are a network of support – who better understands the ups, the downs, the joys, the challenges than we do.

We have heard your recommendations regarding meeting and sharing time with other volunteers. For the month of February the CCN Huddle wants to do something special. On Monday, February 27th, we will meet in person to celebrate Valentine's day together. Please register if you would like to participate. We only have 24 spots. Please join us for drinks, arts and crafts, snacks, and to meet other volunteers.

Register [HERE](#)

**Trainings are offered to inform your advocacy,  
help you think creatively about your case,**

and to build community.

**SFCASA Advocates are required to earn 12 CE credits per calendar year.**

Please visit [Additional Continuing Education Opportunities](#) for alternative options.

*[Do you have ideas for future CEs? Let us know by emailing training@sfcasa.org](mailto:training@sfcasa.org)*

## ***CASA Tip of the Month***

***Get creative about how you connect with the youth you serve!***

***Calls, texts, emails, sharing memes and videos, notecards, emojis, a small care package let them know you are thinking of them.***



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