

It's simply better banking. [Learn More](#)  
Member FDIC

**UNITED AMERICAN BANK**  
Member FDIC  
Simply better banking.

[http://www.smdailyjournal.com/news/local/male-mentors-sought-for-foster-youth-out-of-court-appointed/article\\_cfed9f40-ee06-5832-9a8d-d2f5cbf794c5.html](http://www.smdailyjournal.com/news/local/male-mentors-sought-for-foster-youth-out-of-court-appointed/article_cfed9f40-ee06-5832-9a8d-d2f5cbf794c5.html)

## Male mentors sought for foster youth: Out of 167 court appointed special advocate volunteers, only 18 percent are men

By Bill Silverfarb Daily Journal Staff May 19, 2016



CASA of San Mateo County is looking to recruit men to volunteer to provide mentorship to youth in foster care.

Nonprofit groups that advocate for foster youth in the Bay Area have combined forces in an effort to recruit more men to mentor a population that has often been abused and neglected.

Ten nonprofits that train and support court appointed special advocates (CASAs) in the region are in desperate need of volunteers, especially men, to provide support for children removed from their homes by the courts.

CASA of San Mateo County pairs about 300 youth in foster care a year with volunteers to represent the child's best interests in court. The advocates also assist children in school and help them access needed resources.

In April, CASA served 181 children in foster youth with 40 percent of them being boys.

But out of the agency's 167 CASA volunteers, only 18 percent of them are men, said Pat Miljanich, executive director of CASA of San Mateo County.

“It’s a gap we are trying to fill for a variety of reasons,” she said.

Nearly half of the foster youth served are ages 13-18 and Latinos make up the largest ethnic group of foster youth at 35 percent.

CASA’s mission is to ensure that all abused and neglected children under the protection of the court have a consistent and caring adult who speaks on their behalf and helps them reach their full potential.

May is Foster Care Awareness Month and, with Father’s Day approaching next month, Miljanich hopes that more men will step up to volunteer.

“These are young men without male role models. They need one going through this period of life. This is the time when they are figuring out their identities and roles in society,” she said about teens in foster care.

Many have bad family histories and many were raised by single mothers.

Productive and responsible male role models are scarce, according to CASA.

There is also a lack of foster families in the county, Miljanich said.

Many foster youth in the county may live with multiple families and go to multiple schools in a single year. The outcomes are more positive when a foster youth is mentored for a year, she said.

CASA serves about 60 percent of all foster children in the county. Mentors help identify their unmet needs, Miljanich said.

Kids in foster care often come from impoverished homes without any real parental guidance, she said.

“They are the most vulnerable,” she said.

The child welfare system can be complicated and youth need all the support they can get, she said.

On average, a CASA volunteer dedicates about 10.5 hours a month to their foster child.

Volunteers attended 545 court hearings last year and submitted 326 court reports, according to CASA.

Mentors must attend about 30 hours of training before being paired with a foster child.

The mentors are essential because children whose pasts are marred by trauma face uncertain futures with higher risks of substance abuse, homelessness, incarceration and unemployment.

Last year, San Mateo County Manager John Maltbie requested the Board of Supervisors to support three major milestones he believes can be achieved by 2020.

They include ending homelessness, getting 80 percent of children reading at grade level by fourth-grade and ensuring foster youth finish high school and complete two years of community college.

To improve services for foster youth, all CASA programs in the Bay Area are also recruiting more people of color to better reflect the children and families they serve.

CASA offers training in Spanish too.

Volunteers are required to commit to the program for at least 18 months.

While there are many different mentoring programs available to volunteers, advocates are court appointed and they can thoroughly research every aspect of a child's case, including meeting teachers, doctors, social workers, counselors, biological family members and foster parents, thereby gaining a comprehensive perspective on what the child needs to thrive, according to CASA.

CASA's next volunteer training starts July 12.

Go to [casaofsanmateo.org](http://casaofsanmateo.org) to learn more.

[bill@smdailyjournal.com](mailto:bill@smdailyjournal.com)

(650) 344-5200 ext. 102

#### You May Like

Sponsored Links by Taboola

#### **This game will keep you up all night!**

Vikings: Free Online Game

#### **Congress Gives California Homeowners Who Owe Less Than \$300-625k A Once-In-A-Lifetime Mortgage Bailout**

LowerMyBills

#### **This App Can Teach You Spanish In Just 3 Weeks**

Babbel

#### **Vacation rentals for every budget**

HomeToGo.com

#### **This Game brings the Elf Fantasy World to Life in Campbell**

Elvenar - Free Online Game

#### **4 Worst Blood Pressure Meds**

Vibrant Health Network

#### **3 "Death Foods" That You Should Avoid**

BIO X4 Supplement

#### **If you own a computer you must try this game!**

Throne: Free Online Game