



Press Release: New Year's Resolutions

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A worthy New Year's resolution: Advocate for an abused or neglected child

New Year's resolutions typically focus on self-improvement: lose weight, stop smoking, exercise more often. This year, why not resolve to do something even more lasting: improve the life of a child who's suffered abuse and neglect?

As a court-appointed special advocate (CASA), volunteers receive in-depth training to advocate in court and in the community for the needs and rights of children in foster care. Volunteers come from all walks of life and professions and have one thing in common: they care about kids.

“Volunteers get to know the child they represent by talking with everyone in that child's life: parents and relatives, foster parents, teachers, medical professionals, attorneys, social workers and others. They use the information they gather to inform judges and others of what the child needs and what will be the best permanent home for them,” explains Donna McBride, CASA Unit Supervisor for Pinal County.

Volunteers complete a 30-hour pre-service training. Once they are assigned to a case, they can expect to spend an average of about 10 hours a month getting to know the child, gathering information, exploring resources to meet the child's needs, representing the child in court and writing reports. Volunteers receive ongoing education and support from their local program as well as from the National CASA Association.

“It's one of the most personally rewarding experiences I've ever had,” says local volunteer Anne Lewis. “For many of the kids I've worked with, I've been the only stable, supportive adult in their lives. My sole responsibility is to protect their rights and to find them a safe and nurturing forever home. I know that I'm not just helping these children, but their kids and their grandkids and generations of kids to follow.”

To learn more about how you can make a difference in the life of an abused or neglected child, contact the CASA of Pinal County at 520-866-7076 or emailing www.CASAofPinalCounty.org.

“Becoming an advocate for foster children will be the best resolution you can make for this year or any year,” McBride concludes.

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