

Ways and Means Co-Chairs and Committee,

I will begin by saying...on behalf of all CASA's and our CASA Staff in Jackson and Josephine Counties, please take the time to understand the value we offer the community, both in the short term and importantly long-term.

The Kiddo's we support are the next generations of our communities and without support, without a chance to blossom as young adults that contribute value to our community ...we will all suffer.

Please Continue to Support our CASA programs. Thank you in advance for your consideration and continued support.

My background: I have been a CASA of Jackson and Josephine Counties since January 2021. My wife was a CASA in Marin County California in the 1980's when we were raising our family. After leaving the "work-a-day-world" on a fulltime basis, I knew that I wanted to become a CASA and help support the generations that will follow me in our community.

Shortly after completing my CASA training, which I will say was one of the best training programs I have experienced during my 4-decade long management career, I was assigned my Kiddo's. I was anxious and uncertain about my skill and the value that I would offer. However, each day and or hour of doubt, I referred back to my training and importantly received the necessary support from our Executive Director, my Case Manager and also an outstanding Peer Coach. As a result, I have grown and become more confident and believe I am making a difference in the lives of my Kiddo's.

I understood that importance of being a CASA and the value I would be able to offer my Kiddo's. Suffice to say, we have a nationwide problem with drug abuse, however our counties, Jackson and Josephine rank the highest in our state – a sad by true fact. And Oregon, ranks one of the highest in comparison to other states nationwide. I am not sure it's getting better. Addiction is a disease and it continues to undermine any sense of security and any chance of a family, and importantly children having the opportunity to realize their full potential.

On a county-wide basis, we need more CASA's. The number continues to grow closer to 300 additional CASA volunteers needed to support all of the Kiddo's in need. There are many contributing factors COVID, the Alameda Fire in Jackson County, and the proliferation of drugs and dealers infiltrating our community. All putting demands on individuals and families that are not able to cope. I am optimistic about the fact we are making a difference; however, I don't think society-wide problem is going away anytime soon. Therefore, the importance of continuing to fund CASA.

In closing, I will say, I believe I am making a difference. I became involved in their school program and planning. To note, they are both 4.0 students each with unique strengths. They both have part time jobs – I was able to help direct that process, that is to say, make recommendations. On the school front, I did speak with the Graduation Counselor to make sure that would graduate on time. As a result, they enrolled in Summer school last year. One of the girls stated, I want to become an aeronautical engineer. Past life contact colleague is at

NASA so last year I received and forwarded to both girl's information about NASA's summer internships. They'll become available for that in Junior year, next year.

I don't what to suggest, all is good. Life is much better than it was in December 2020. They carry forward significant trauma. Things can change at a moment's notice; however, it is my belief that with the continued support of their wonderful Resource Parents, recently appointed Guardians approved by the court, along with all of the support CASA provides, combined with their maternal grandmother and sister, and other step-family members their chances of success have increased tremendously.

Thank you for taking the time to read my summary, and for your consideration. I am available to speak with anyone one:one.

Please Continue to Support our CASA programs.

CASA Jerry

April, 12, 2023