

Mid-Year -newsletter-



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

CASA OF PINAL COUNTY





JUNE



SUN

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

1 National Cancer Survivors Day. A Celebration of Life

2 16 Years Anniversary Sandy H

3 7 Years Anniversary Mary G

4 PSG @ 5:30 Pm Meeting ID: 840 7069 7292 Passcode: 452784

5 NATIONAL DONUT DAY

6 Happy Birthday Lisa MS

7 Happy Birthday Ashia T

8 CHILDREN'S DAY

9 9 Years Anniversary Stephen P

10 NATIONAL Egg Roll DAY

11 Maricopa In-Person PSG @ 4:30 Pm

12 WORLD DAY AGAINST CHILD LABOUR

13 NATIONAL TAKE YOUR DOG TO WORK DAY!

14 6 Years Anniversary Alice E

15 HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

16 NATIONAL BEST FRIENDS DAY

17 Happy Birthday Marian F

18 San Tan Valley In-Person PSG @ 5:30 Pm

19 Celebrate JUNE TEENTH Freedom

20 Happy Birthday Alice E

21 HAPPY BIRTHDAY MARY W

22 Happy Birthday Tahji J

23 Jun 23 UNITED NATIONS PUBLIC SERVICE DAY

24 Happy Birthday Sue G

25 Apache Junction & Casa Grande In-Person PSG @ 5:30 Pm

26 International Day Against DRUG ABUSE & TRAFFICKING (26th June)

27 NATIONAL PTSD AWARENESS DAY JUNE 27

28 Happy Birthday Christine J

29 HAPPY 20th CASA ANNIVERSARY Kelley K

30 RBTS BOOK CLUB @ 4pm "THE LITTLE PRINCESS" Meeting ID: 812 4185 6854

June is: National Reunification Month PRIDE MONTH National Safety Month

June Babies 6th: Lisa MS 7th: Ashia T 17th: Marian F 20th: Alice E 21st: Mary W 21st: Christine J 22nd: Tahji J 25th: Sue G

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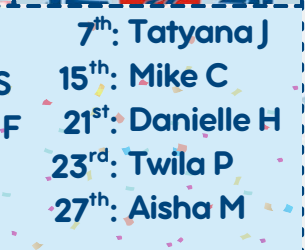
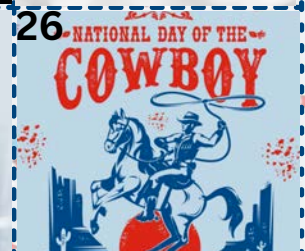
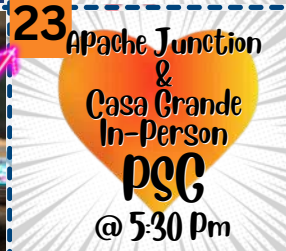
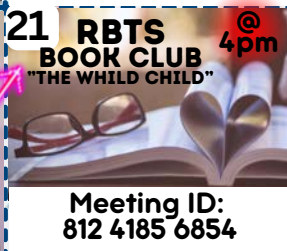
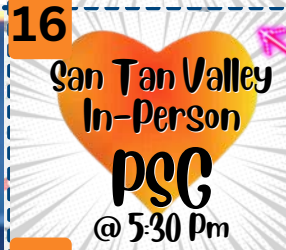
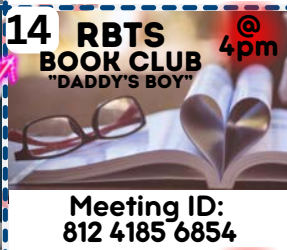
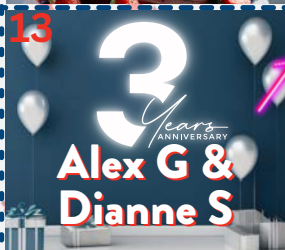
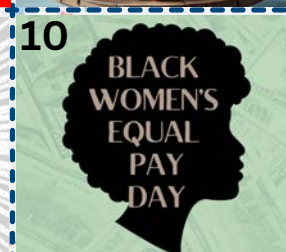
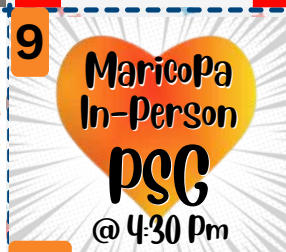
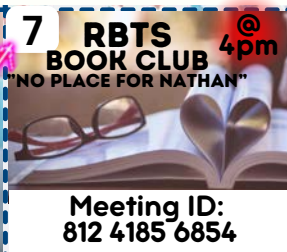
THU

FRI

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July is:

- National Park & Recreation Month
- National Ice Cream Month
- National Anti-boredom Month



- July Babies:
- 1st: Kendra S
 - 3rd: Suchela F

- 7th: Tatyana J
- 15th: Mike C
- 21st: Danielle H
- 23rd: Twila P
- 27th: Aisha M

CASA SPOTLIGHT

This month spotlight highlights a few new CASA volunteers.

We all know how hard a new case can be, add that to your very first case as a new CASA and you've entered a scary situation.

Regina C. received her new case, a very delicate substance exposed newborn. Within days of receiving, she contacted DCS, placement and met the child. Regina then went above and beyond attending all doctors' appointments. Not an easy task as this child had multiple doctors, specialist and in home therapies. Regina then wrote her first court report, Judge Wharton specifically thank her in court for "a very thorough and well written court report". Regina's "hit the ground running" attitude made a huge impact on this young child.



REGINA C

Jackie T. is another new CASA that "hit the ground running". She also contacted and met the placement and child within days of receiving her case. Jackie is one of those "crazy" CASA's that choose a 15-year-old girl as her child. Jackie has not only advocated for the child but also for the placement, her grandparents. Jackie not only makes dates to take her child out, but she also schedules time with grandmother for some quality time away from the home. We all know how important it is to get some "me" time with a teenager in the home. The grandparents stated after a court appearance "we've gotten more information and help from Jackie in 1 month than we have from DCS 6 months".



JACKIE T

CASA SPOTLIGHT

Finally, Luz P. and Kathy D. are 2 volunteers that applied together and are working as co-Casas. Their pre-teen boy is benefitting from this dynamic duo. Their teamwork tackling this case is working out well. While one of them is inside with placement talking about “all that boring stuff” the other is outside with the child spending quality time with him. They’ve gotten to know placement well and have seen firsthand how a loving home and the right environment can make a big impact on a child.



LUZ P



KATHY D

Ladies. Your dedication is obvious and CASA thanks you. Without awesome volunteers like you life would look allot different for these kids.

You are truly appreciated!



By Their Side: Advocating for Children in Foster Care

Neuroscience, Trauma, and the Path to Resilience with Rick Griffin

0:00 45:03

Jun 5, 2025

1x

By Their Side: Advocating for Children in Foster Care

More than a Crown with Cordelia Cranshaw

0:00 37:17

Apr 9, 2025

1x

By Their Side: Advocating for Children in Foster Care

The Power of Belonging with Gaelin Elmore

0:00 41:55

Feb 20, 2025

1x

By Their Side: Advocating for Children in Foster Care

Hope as a Turning Point with Lindsey Shine & Samara Vaught (Part 2)

0:00 27:09

Jan 28, 2025

1x

By Their Side: Advocating for Children in Foster Care

Hope as a Turning Point with Lindsey Shine & Samara Vaught (Part 1)

0:00 35:46

Jan 28, 2025

1x

By Their Side: Advocating for Children in Foster Care

Navigating Big Emotions with Allison Davis Maxon M.S., LMFT

0:00 53:31

Nov 8, 2024

1x

By Their Side: Advocating for Children in Foster Care

Authentic Advocacy with Maryann McEvoy, Ed.D.

0:00 41:14

Aug 12, 2024

1x

Training Videos

Culture, Diversity, Inclusion

- [Through the Lens of Implicit Bias](#) - Shawn C. Marsh, Ph.D. 2017 (145 mins)

Dependency

- [Walk Through the Maze: The Arizona Dependency Process](#) - Dawn Williams, CWLS (65 mins)
- [The Dependency Process & the Role of FCRB & CASA Volunteers](#) - Jessica McCowan (60 min)
- [The Dependency Process & DCS Role](#) - Jessica McCowan (90 min)
- [Appeals Process 101: Introduction](#) - Dawn Williams, CWLS (65 mins)
- [Reasonable & Active Efforts 101 for Volunteers](#) - Jessica McCowan (120 min)

Education/Development

- [Educational Advocacy for Youth 0-5](#) - Jessica McCowan (120 min)
- [Educational Advocacy for Youth 12-17](#) - Jessica McCowan (100 min)

Families Perspective

- [How Would Franz Kafka View Dependency Proceedings in Arizona](#) - Hon. Bruce R. Cohen & Gabe Goltz 2017 (90 mins)
- [Youth Panel](#) - 2018 (36 Mins)

Fostering Change, A Foster Care Community Award-Winning Podcast

Now in its 6th Season and ranked as the "Best Podcast to Listen to Regarding Foster Care and Adoption" for three consecutive years, Comfort Cases founder Rob Scheer hosts this inspiring show about how communities can come together to bring dignity and hope to children in the foster care system. New episodes are posted every other Tuesday on this page, YouTube, and your favorite channels to listen to podcasts.



LISTEN NOW

LISTEN NOW

2025 Training Stars (so far)

We are officially at the half year mark and **Twila P** is already at **77** training hours! Last year's Champ, **Pat W** won the title with 92 training hours, but **Debbie H** it's getting in the way of a repeat win for sure. And don't forget about newbie **Lauren W** coming up right behind, she's motivated for sure. It's still anyone's race, I wouldn't bet against any one of these overachievers.



Last Years Defending Champion, **Pat W** is currently sitting in **3rd** place. Will she be able to repeat?

There's only 6 months left to complete your training hours!

CURRENT STANDINGS:

- 1st - Twila P - 77 hours
- 2nd - Debbie H - 38 hours
- 3rd- Pat W - 32 hours
- 4th - Lauren W - 27 hours
- 5th - Suchela F - 24 hours
- 6th - Patty S - 23 hours
- 7th- Bobbie S - 22 hours
- 8th- Tabitha A - 18 hours
- 9th - Shannon E - 16 hours
- 9th - Alex G - 16 hours
- 9th - Michelle T - 16 hours
- 10th - Susan HT - 15 hours



from Az Families Thrive June Newsletter

JUNE: NATIONAL REUNIFICATION MONTH



Reunification Month

As all caregivers know, the goal of foster care is reunification. It is not always easy to actively support and encourage reunification, and it comes with its own unique sense of accomplishment, which is also tinged with grief and loss. Nevertheless, we forge on in the best interest of the children in our care and do what we can to put their family back together.

What is the difference between actively and passively supporting reunification?

Foster parents who actively support reunification understand that reunification is most often in the child's best interest and are committed to doing what is best for the child, even if it involves complexity or loss for the foster family.

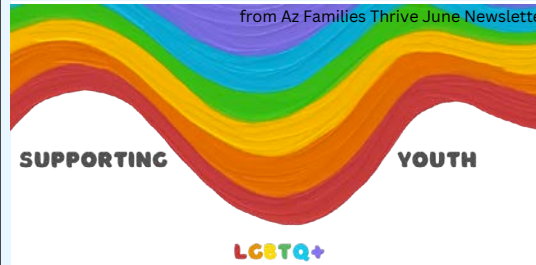
In contrast, a foster parent who passively supports reunification doesn't interfere with the achievement of the plan goal but doesn't work toward it.

Ideally, all caregivers should actively support reunification. Here are some tools and resources to help children and families on this journey:

Respect the birth parents and be compassionate. This seems simple enough, but it can be difficult to remember this, especially when we see that the children are hurting. Some ways to put this into practice are:

- Express genuine concern for the family's well-being.
- Communicate to the family (through words and actions) that your goal is to help them get their children back.
- Use the terms "Mom" and "Dad" (or their preferred terms) when referring to the parents.
- Assume positive intent. Few parents set out with the goal to harm their children, and they may make mistakes.
- Look for ways to break down barriers. Attempt communication, even when you get none in return.
- Act as a support for the family, both during the dependency and post-reunification, when possible.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



Investing in the mental health and overall well-being of LGBTQ+ children in out-of-home care has wide-ranging positive outcomes:

- **Enhanced Mental Health:** Supportive environments decrease the risk of mental health disorders, promote emotional resilience, and facilitate healing from past traumas.
- **Improved Educational Outcomes:** When LGBTQ+ youth feel safe and supported, their educational outcomes improve.
- **Positive Self-Identity Development:** Providing affirming environments allows LGBTQ+ youth to explore and embrace their identities. Self-acceptance and self-esteem grow, leading to healthier relationships and a stronger sense of belonging.
- **Decreased Risk of Homelessness and Substance Abuse:** Supporting LGBTQ+ youth in out-of-home care reduces their risk of homelessness and substance abuse, which are prevalent among this population.

Supporting the mental health of LGBTQ+ youth in out-of-home care is imperative. By providing nurturing environments, access to LGBTQ+ competent mental health services, and inclusive policies, we can make a significant impact on their well-being.

There are several organizations that are available, both locally and nationally, to assist in supporting LGBTQ+ youth.

- [one-n-ten](#) is a Phoenix-based organization that supports LGBTQ+ youth and young adults, ages 11-24.
- [Pride Guide Arizona](#) is a listing of businesses and organizations that serve the LGBTQ+ community.
- [Arizona Trans Youth & Parent Organization \(AZTYPO\)](#) is a support group to empower children, teens, and their families in a supportive and inclusive environment in which gender may be freely expressed and respected.
- The [Southern Arizona Gender Alliance \(SAGA\)](#) is a nonprofit that offers support, social, and discussion groups for various trans and gender nonconforming (TGNC) folks and their loved ones.
- As an organization dedicated to inclusiveness, [Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Arizona](#) values and celebrates the diversity and individuality of every child, volunteer, employee, board member, family and community partner. BBBS partners with one-n-ten Youth Center to provide mentors to children who identify as LGBTQ+.
- [Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays \(PFLAG\)](#) is the first and largest organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) people, their parents and families, and allies.
- The [Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network \(GLSEN\)](#) believes that every student has the right to a safe, supportive, and LGBTQ-inclusive K-12 education.
- Founded in 1998 by the creators of the Academy Award®-winning short film TREVOR, [The Trevor Project](#) is the leading national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer & questioning (LGBTQ) young people under 25.
- [LGBTQ Family Acceptance Project](#) has a searchable map to access resources to increase support for LGBTQ+ youth and families.

[READ FULL ARTICLE HERE](#)

June is National Rose Month!

300+ species of roses exist worldwide. The first rose in America is believed to have been found in modern-day Colorado around 50 million years ago. On September 23rd, 1986, through an act of Congress and a proclamation of then-President Ronald Reagan, the rose (all varieties) was declared the National Flower. The rose became the 2nd of only 4 national natural symbols.

The world's largest rose tree can be found in Tombstone, AZ. Planted by a Scottish immigrant in 1885, it now covers 8,000 sq. feet.



The Rose Museum in Tombstone opened in 1964, featuring the large rose tree and its knarled trunk providing plenty of shade under its canopy.



Historically, roses have symbolized various intensities of love, power, or secrecy. The colors, numbers, and combinations influence the message. Roses given with thorns symbolize the complexities of relationships, resilience, and personal growth, while roses without thorns represent simple affection.

- White = associated with new beginnings, purity, loyalty, romance.
- Ivory = a great color for elegance, calm, luxury, and friendship.
- Yellow = represents friendship, happiness, and care.
- Peach = means thanks, loyalty, genuineness, and sympathy.
- Orange = enthusiasm, encouragement, excitement, and admiration.
- Hot Pink = recognition and admiration
- Pale Pink = grace, elegance, gratitude, and joy.
- Red = romantic love, passion, and longing.
- Purple = royalty, majesty, success, and achievement.
- Lavender = love at first sight, dating, fascination, adoration.
- Green = harmony, peace, stability, health, best wishes, and well-being.
- Blue = secrecy, mystery, uniqueness, and acceptance of unrequited love.
- Black = change, courage, confidence, mourning, and farewell.

What the number of stems mean: 1 = love or renewed love; 2 = mutual affection; 3 = "I love you;" 6 = infatuation/desire; 9 = eternal love; 12 = "be mine;" 13 = forever friends; 15 = remorse and apology; 25 = congratulations

CASA SOUND OFF!

"This is our Annie! She was my 19th wedding anniversary gift from my hubby and I love her so much! She is the most loving and sensitive pup we have ever had in our lives!

Don't let her size fool you she is big in personality! She loves long road trips and donkeys. She gets so excited when she sees them. Our RV trip to Oatman was her favorite as she met so many!

-Traci M.



JODI'S PAGE

JUST FOR FUN!

The Heat is on...Cool it!

Easy cool treats for you alone
or to make with someone and share!

Frozen yogurt covered fruit/berry bites.

1. Prep a backing sheet or large plate by lining with wax or parchment paper.
2. Dip bite size pieces of fruit or berries into your choice of yogurt, placing on baking sheet or plate as you go. Place whole sheet or plate in freezer, freezing until solid.
3. Place frozen pieces in a freezer safe bag to enjoy as a refreshing snack.



Some recommendations: blueberries, grapes, quartered strawberries, sliced bananas. Diced mango, kiwi, watermelon, cantaloupe. Usually, sweetened vanilla or berry greek yogurt goes best for dipping. If you use plain, greek yogurt, you might want to add a touch of honey. Use coconut yogurt and add shredded cococut to the dip for a tropical twist. Use banana flavored yogurt and mix peanut butter or mini chocolate chips to the dip. Sprinkle yogurt dipped bites with grape nuts or granola before freezing. Variation: instead of yogurt, dip in melted chocolate, add chopped nuts, coconut shreds, melted peanut butter or caramel drizzel before freezing.



TRY SOMETHING NEW!

All Pinal County events are admission-free,
and parking free. Food and some games
may have to be purchased at some events.

- Florence, 7/4 @ 5 PM - 9:15 PM, Heritage Park, 600 N. Main St. Freedom Fest. Corn hole tournament, BBQ rib contest, inflatables, food vendors, a DJ, live bands and fireworks.
- AJ, 7/4 @ 6 PM - 9:30, Superstition Shadows park, 1091 W. Southern Ave., Celebration & Fireworks. Game booths, kids activities, bicycle, tricycle, & wagon mini float contest at 6:30 PM. Shuttles from AJ Highschool. Fireworks at 8:30 PM.
- Coolidge, 7/3 @ 6 PM, Kenilworth park, 10438 N. Christenson Rd. 4th of July Celebration. Photo booth, games, watermelon, fireworks at 9 PM.
- CG, 7/4 @ 7 PM - 10 PM, Paul Mason park, 2525 N. Pinal Ave., 4th of July Celebration. Face painting, games, bubble foam, tiny tot area, water slides, fireworks at the end of festivities.
- Eloy, 7/4 @ 6 PM - 8 PM, Main St. Park, 601 N. Main, 4th of July Bash. Swimming at Aquatics Center from noon - 5 pm. Inflatables, games, food, music, raffles, and more! Fireworks at end of festivities.
- Maricopa, 7/4 @ 7 - 9:30 PM, Copper Sky park, 44345 W. Bowlin Rd. Great American 4th. Music, inflatable kid zone, BMX stunt show. Fireworks close the event.

The Hidden Cost of “Good Behavior”

aztrauma.thinkific.com



Arizona Trauma Institute

When a Child Obeys Out of Fear, Schools Call It Progress

A school counselor once asked me why a particular student was “doing better.” “No more outbursts. No more defiance,” they said. “He is quiet now.”

But when I saw him in my office, I noticed his sleeves clenched in his fists, his voice barely above a whisper.

“I just try not to feel anything at school,” he said. “It is easier when no one notices me.” He was numb.

He Had Traded Authenticity for Avoidance

The teacher saw progress. I saw shutdown. The school mistook silence for self-regulation. What I witnessed was a child who had learned to disappear.

This moment happened in the mid 90s, and it was one of the first things that opened my eyes to the deeper dynamics of our educational system.

We call quiet classrooms learning. We call protest defiance. We call compliance healing.

But trauma does not vanish when a child stops speaking. It goes underground; into the nervous system, the body, and the core beliefs they begin to carry about themselves.

The Neuroscience Behind “Good Behavior”

Trauma does not always scream. Sometimes it goes still.

According to The Polyvagal Theory, when fight and flight do not work, the nervous system moves into shutdown, a dorsal vagal freeze response. The child appears calm. But inside, they have learned: “Nothing I do will change this. It is safer not to feel.” This is not healing. This is a functional freeze response. Survival disguised as good behavior.

The Moment That Changed Everything

This student, we will call him Jay, had been in foster care. He moved from school to school. Punished for being disruptive. Shamed for being curious. Praised when he finally became invisible.

One day in session, I told him: “You do not have to disappear to be okay with me.” Not the most elegant phrase, but it landed. He looked up, startled. He was not afraid of being bad. He was afraid of being seen and punished for it.

Why This Matters

As therapists, educators, and support professionals, we must be careful. If we are not aware, we can unintentionally teach trauma-impacted students to:

- Suppress emotion
- Perform safety without feeling it
- Disconnect from their own stories

Healing does not always look calm. Sometimes it looks like chaos finding the courage to come out of hiding. Those moments when a child pushes back, breaks down, or withdraws are not failures. They are signs that trust is beginning to form. We cannot afford to minimize the relational aspects of our work in the name of efficiency. Safety is not created through silence. It is created through connection.

Reflection Question:

Have you ever mistaken silence for regulation? Compliance for healing? Let us keep learning. Let us keep seeing the whole child.

With care,
Dr. Robert Rhoton, Founder of The Arizona Trauma Institute

DOUGY CENTER
Get Grief-Informed for Youth in Foster Care
[CLICK HERE FOR RESOURCES](#)

Fall Internships for Teens with Pay, Mentorship, and Experience!

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)

YOUTHFORCE

from Az Families Thrive June Newsletter

SUPPLEMENTAL SCHOOL TUITION

Did you know that every school-age child in the care of DCS has up to two allowances of \$165 per year to help pay for summer school or other tuition fees? Simply request it via the DCS Specialist, and they will submit a service request as they would for any other special allowance.

“Every Kids is one caring adult away from being a success story.”
-Josh Shipp