

CASA CHRONICLE

Child Abuse Prevention Month

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month which serves as a time for awareness in our communities that we may all have a role in preventing child abuse and neglect. Here are some ways you can help prevent child abuse and neglect in your community:

- Offer support to a friend or family member. Parenting can be fulfilling, yet it often brings stress. If you notice someone struggling, consider volunteering to babysit or assist with household chores, allowing them some much-needed time to recharge.
- Be aware of signs of abuse. Indicators may include unexplained injuries, withdrawal from friends and family, inappropriate behavior, changes in eating or sleeping patterns, and sudden outbursts of anger. If something feels off, it's crucial to speak up.
 - If you see something, say something: If you have reason to believe a child is being abused or witness child abuse or neglect, call 1-888-SOS-CHILD to report the abuse to DCS.
- Support community programs. Get actively involved! Your participation in community initiatives can play a crucial role in safeguarding against child abuse. When community members unite to offer afterschool activities, mentorships, and safe spaces, the entire community thrives!

National Crime Victims' Rights Week, April 19-25

Since 1981, National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCFRW) has challenged the Nation to confront and remove barriers to achieve justice for all victims of crime. During NCFRW, we recognize the accomplishments of the victims' rights movement and reflect on how far we have come.

Every April, The Office of Justice Programs, Office for Victims of Crime, leads communities throughout the country in their annual observances of NCFRW. In 2026, we will observe NCFRW on April 19-25, with the theme – **Listen. Act. Advocate.**

Protect victims, serve communities.

Learn more about the **Office for Victims of Crime** or NCFRW [here](#)

CASA Volunteer Week April 6-12th

CASA Volunteer Week offers a wonderful opportunity to acknowledge and appreciate the commitment of CASA volunteers. It also aims to raise awareness about the pressing need for more individuals to step up and make a difference in the lives of children in foster care. CASA volunteers provide an invaluable service by building trusted relationships with the youth they are appointed to, advocating for timely permanency and stability, promoting positive outcomes, and helping children pursue their dreams and lead self-determined lives. We are truly grateful for the incredible group of volunteers serving in Gila County.

See the Official Arizona Proclamation on Page 2

Thank you, CASA of Gila County Volunteers

Allison - Barbara - Bonita - Breanna - Carrie
Catherine - Cris - Darla - Debra - Duren
Gail - Joanne - Judy - Karrol - Ken - Kimberly
Lana - Laura - Linda - Maria - Monika
Peggy - Polly - Sherry - Tammie - Tracie - Tracy




**LISTEN.
ACT.
ADVOCATE.**
National Crime
Victims' Rights Week
APRIL 19-25, 2026

GOVERNOR KATIE HOBBS

ARIZONA PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the health, safety, and well-being of Arizona's children are fundamental to the prosperity of our communities and future of our state; and

WHEREAS, each year, thousands of Arizona children enter the child welfare system due to reports of abuse or neglect, which can result in uncertainty, instability, and a lack of consistent support during a challenging time in their young lives; and

WHEREAS, a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) is a trained volunteer, appointed by a judge to advocate for the best interests of a child in foster care, ensuring their voice is heard and their needs are met in court proceedings, placement decisions, and other critical areas; and

WHEREAS, CASA volunteers provide an invaluable service by building trusted relationships with their appointed youth, advocating for timely permanency and stability, promoting more positive outcomes, and helping children pursue their dreams and lead self-determined lives; and

WHEREAS, in Arizona, CASA volunteers work diligently in partnership with judges, attorneys, social workers, the Arizona Department of Child Safety, and community partners to ensure these children have support, resources, and opportunities, now and in the future; and

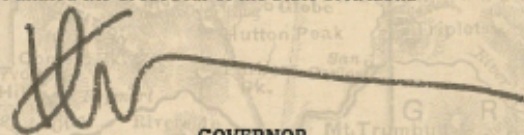
WHEREAS, the work of CASA volunteers has a profound and lasting impact on the lives of vulnerable children, providing them with a consistent, compassionate presence to help restore a more hopeful future; and

WHEREAS, CASA Volunteer Week provides an opportunity to recognize and honor the dedication of CASA volunteers, raise awareness about the urgent need for more individuals to step forward, and make a difference in the lives of children in foster care.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Katie Hobbs, Governor of the State of Arizona, do hereby proclaim April 6 - 12, 2026, as,

CASA VOLUNTEER WEEK

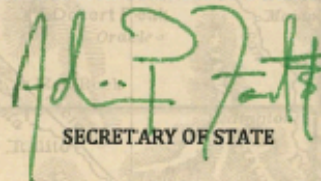
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the State of Arizona



GOVERNOR

DONE at the Capitol in Phoenix on this twenty-fifth day of March in the year Two Thousand and Twenty-Six and of the Independence of the United States of America the Two Hundred and Fiftieth.

ATTEST:



SECRETARY OF STATE





OUR CASA TEAM IN ACTION!

CASA Advocacy Competency: Foundations of Knowledge

CASA Lana has devoted more than six years as a CASA Volunteer, advocating for 15 children while continuously expanding her knowledge base. During this time, she has sought out numerous opportunities to enhance her CASA skills. By participating in a variety of training sessions, she consistently improves her capacity to advocate effectively for the children she is appointed to. Additionally, Lana enriches the program by offering insightful feedback on various trainings, which aids us in discovering new resources for other volunteers, thereby broadening their training options.

CASA Advocacy Competency: Communication



CASA Tracie's CASA Court Report was misfiled and the Judge and legal parties in the case did not have a chance to review it. Even without having the written court report the child's attorney had trust in CASA Tracie to provide verbal updates and advocacy for their mutually assigned child. Tracie provided everyone with a verbal update on the spot on how the child is doing.

CASA Advocacy Competency: Initiative



CASA Tracy (not to be confused with CASA Tracie above) has shown great growth in her advocacy role. The DCS Specialist on her case called to thank CASA Tracy for her written court report and commend her for her insight into the nuances of this complicated case. The DCS Specialist was amazed to learn that this is CASA Tracy's first case assignment and she came to CASA with no prior social work history. CASA Tracy has actively worked to ensure that her appointed child has everything to be successful, including setting up meetings with the school to ensure a 504 Plan is in place.



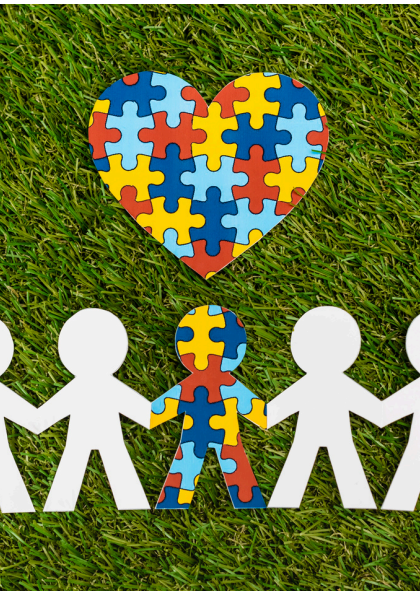
A graphic for an anniversary celebration. It features a light blue background with various party-themed icons: a red and blue striped party hat with confetti, a red balloon, a blue silhouette of a person with arms raised, and a red gift box with a blue ribbon. The text "HAPPY" is in blue, "CASA" is in large orange letters, and "ANNIVERSARY." is in blue. Below the text, "Debra & Tammie" is written in blue.

HAPPY
CASA
ANNIVERSARY.
Debra & Tammie



APRIL

AWARENESS



Autism Acceptance Month

World Autism Acceptance Month is a time for everyone to get involved, raise awareness and celebrate autism acceptance! (<https://waam.autism.org.uk/>)

Autism is a neurodevelopmental condition that can be characterized by a person's challenges with social interactions, communication skills and restrictive and repetitive behaviors.

Everybody with autism is unique, which is why the diagnosis is autism spectrum disorder (ASD), as people range from having mild to severe symptoms. Generally, people with autism see and experience the world differently than most, often having heightened sensory stimulation and unique perspectives or ways of thinking. This is what can make fostering an autistic child such an incredible and unique experience.

<https://www.thefca.co.uk/fostering-autistic-children/>

Stress Awareness Month

Stress Affects Your Body and Mind: Stress is a natural physical and mental reaction to life experiences. Anything from everyday responsibilities like feeding your family to more serious life events like a car accident can trigger stress. In immediate, short-term situations, stress can help you cope with potentially serious situations.

Your body responds to stress by releasing hormones that increase your heart and breathing rates and ready your muscles to respond. However, if this response continues longer than necessary for survival, it can take a toll on your health. Chronic stress can affect your overall well-being, with symptoms impacting many of your body's systems.

<https://www.stress.org/stress-effects>

I'M SO STRESSED OUT!

Is it stress or anxiety?

Stress	Both Stress and Anxiety	Anxiety
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally is a response to an external cause, such as taking a big test or arguing with a friend. Goes away once the situation is resolved. Can be positive or negative. For example, it may inspire you to meet a deadline, or it may cause you to lose sleep. 	<p>Both stress and anxiety can affect your mind and body. You may experience symptoms such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excessive worry Uneasiness Tension Headaches or body pain High blood pressure Loss of sleep 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally is <i>internal</i>, meaning it's your reaction to stress. Usually involves a persistent feeling of apprehension or dread that doesn't go away, and that interferes with how you live your life. Is constant, even if there is no immediate threat.

Ways to Cope

- Keep a journal.
- Download an app with relaxation exercises.
- Exercise and eat healthy.
- Get regular sleep.
- Avoid excess caffeine.
- Identify and challenge your negative thoughts.
- Reach out to your friends or family.

Find Help

If you are struggling to cope, or the symptoms of your stress or anxiety begin to interfere with your everyday life, it may be time to talk to a professional. Find more information about getting help on the National Institute of Mental Health website at www.nimh.nih.gov/findhelp.

National Institute of Mental Health nimh.nih.gov/stressand anxiety

[View the related fact sheet for more information.](#)

How to build kids' resilience, with Mary Alvord, PhD

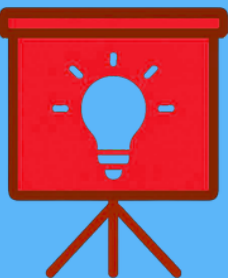
(30 Minute Podcast)

From school pressures to friendship ruptures, all kids will face challenges as they grow. Mary Alvord, PhD, talks why building resilience is key to helping kids handle both everyday stresses and significant life setbacks; how to help children and teens develop foundational resilience skills like emotion regulation, problem solving, and an action mindset; and how the Resilience Builder Program is being scaled up to classrooms and schools to reach more kids who could benefit from it.

Listen here: [APA Podcast: How to Build Kids' Resilience](#)

www.CASAofGilaCounty.org

**CASA
TRAINING
SUGGESTION**



CVRMC
Community
Health Fair
Saturday
April 18, 2026
9:00AM-2:00PM
Globe, Arizona



Note to Self:
Attend a
CASA Support
Group

SAVE THE DATE
FOR A SPECIAL
PRESENTATION
MAY 01, 2026

CHECK YOUR CASA EMAIL
FOR MORE INFORMATION!

Schedule
in some
self care

Chris Higgins
Earth Day
Cleanup
Saturday,
April 18, 2026
10:00AM-4:00 PM
Payson, Arizona



Contact
coordinator
for monthly
check in



CASA Support Groups

CASA support groups are held three times a month, and all meetings are open to every Gila County CASA Volunteer. We encourage you to participate in the session that best accommodates your schedule.

CASA League of Extraordinary Volunteers

2nd Tuesday 12:00PM-2:00PM

In- Person: Payson CASA Office Conference Room

Zoom Link Available- Request from Mariah

Lead: Mariah mlantz@courts.az.gov

CASA Empowerment Allies

3rd Friday 12:00PM-1:00PM

Microsoft Teams Only- Contact Emily for link

Lead: Emily enader@courts.az.gov

CONTACT US

Payson CASA Office

Mariah Lantz,
CASA Coordinator
928-474-7145

mlantz@courts.az.gov

Globe CASA Office

Emily Nader,
CASA Coordinator
928-402-4427

enader@courts.az.gov

CASA In-Service Training

Join us for an in-person or virtual training session specifically designed for you as a CASA volunteer in Gila County.

What Can I do in my CASA Role?

April 22 @ 3:00 pm

