

Change a Child's Story

Yavapai County CASA Program Newsletter

January 2026



This Issue...

Coordinator's Corner 2

Calendars 3-5

Birthdays and Anniversaries 6

CASA Kudos 7

CASA Spotlight 8

Ask the Coordinator 9-10

MatForce Trainings 11

Nature Ninos 12

Peer Support 13

Reunification Case Simulation
Training 14

Dependency 101 15

Wrapped in Love/ Celebrate 16

Book Club 17

FaceBook and Numbers 18

Contact Us 19-20

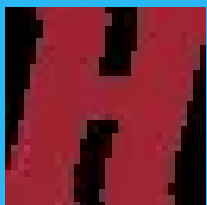


wishing you the
BEST YEAR
EVER!

Coordinators' Corner



HERITAGE PARK
ZOOLOGICAL
SANCTUARY



Please take advantage of our memberships and free passes to these **AWESOME** establishments. Click on each icon to be directed to each of their websites to see how many exciting things they have going on!

**STOP BY THE
OFFICE AND PICK
UP YOUR 2026
CASA CALENDAR
TODAY**

Check this out

Here is a Thank You card from a couple of kiddos whose CASA took them to Out of Africa



I had fun at the Out of Africa. We saw very cool animals. I just want to say thank you we saw animals for four hours because it was fun. Thank you we spend four hours at Out of Africa because of you and we saw tigers, lions, snakes, and a tiger splash. Thank you for doing this to us it was fun.

Child and Family Team Meetings

To receive information about an upcoming CFT with:

CFSS: please email: dawnr@cfssinc.com

Polara Health: please email: whenthecft@polarahealth.com

Spectrum: please email: susans@spectrumhg.org

Please give the clinics 48 hours to reply to your email

January 2026

PRESCOTT

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

1

*Happy
New Year*
CLOSED

2

5

6

FTC 2:00

Hearings

7

8

FCRB

9

FCRB

12

13

Hearings

14 **CASAS
CONNECTING
9 AM**

15

16

19


CLOSED

20

FTC 2:00

21

22

23

26

27

28

**REUNIFICATION
CASE
SIMULATION**

29

**TELE-CASAS
CONNECTING
9 AM**

30

February 2026

PRESCOTT

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

2

3

FTC 2:00

Hearings

7

5

6

9

10

11

**CASAS
CONNECTING
9 AM**

12

**Book Club
9:30 am
see page 17**

13

FCRB

16

**PRESIDENTS
DAY
USA**

17

FTC 2:00

Hearings

18

19

20

23

24

25

26

**TELE-CASAS
CONNECTING
9 AM**

27



January

2026

VERDE

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

1

*Happy
New Year*
CLOSED

2

5

6

FTC 2:00

7

Hearings

8

FCRB
CASA Connecting
9:15AM-11:15AM
Cottonwood
Library DedeEwald

9

FCRB

12

13

14

15

16

19


CLOSED

20

FTC 2:00

21

Hearings

22

23

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27

28

29

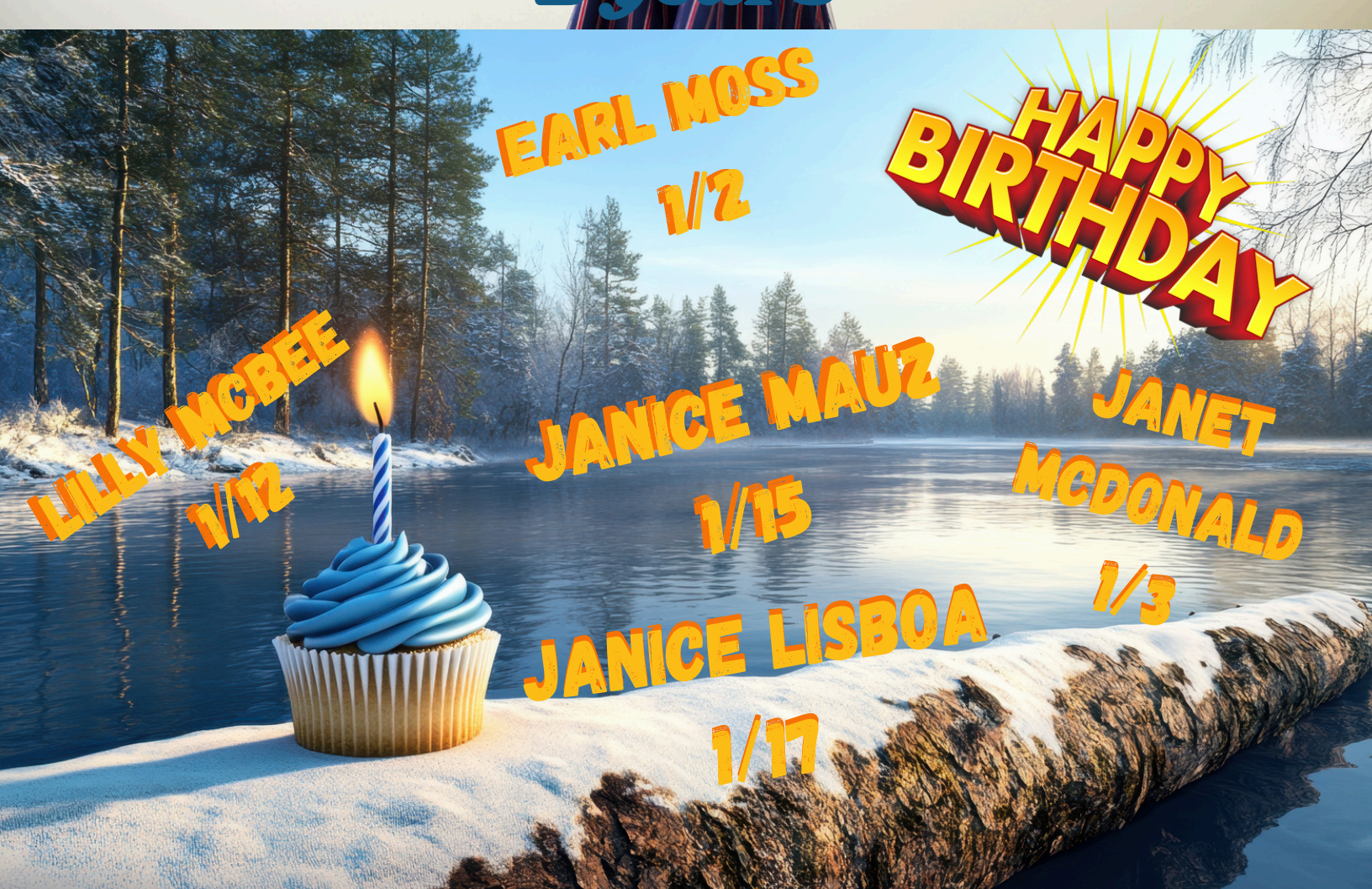
Happy Anniversary



Patricia
Bradford
7 years

Shelly
Miali
7 Years

Laura Ashbrook
2 years



EARL MOSS
1/2

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

LILLY MCBEE
1/12

JANICE MAUZ
1/15

JANET
MCDONALD

JANICE LISBOA
1/17

1/3

CASA Kudos



Selin S. for taking her first case!



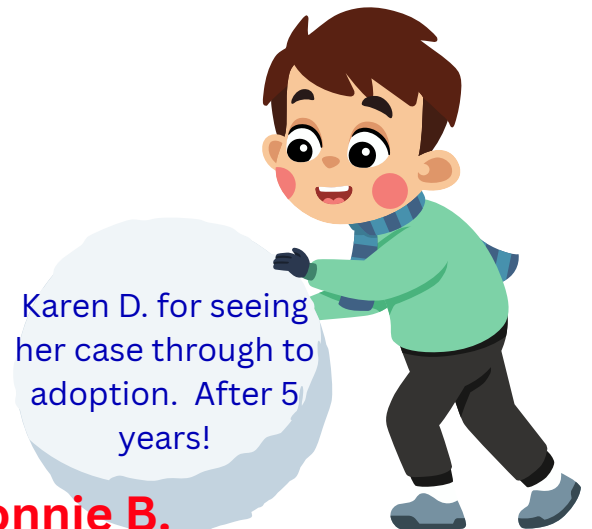
Rose V.N. for always making each visit with her CASA child full of active, engaging, and fun activities.



Miranda F. for ensuring that her CASA children's needs are being met



Janet and Duncan for attending the PP5 for their new case



Karen D. for seeing her case through to adoption. After 5 years!

Connie B.

Bob R.

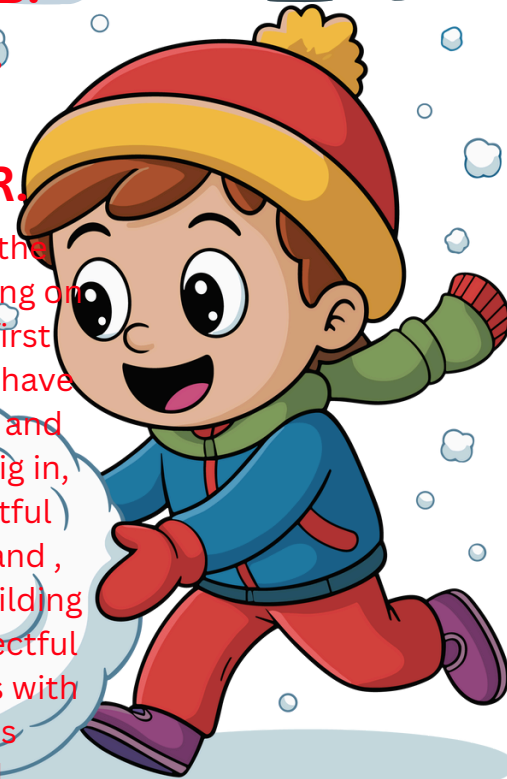
and

Eileen R.

for hitting the ground running on their very first cases. They have gone above and beyond to dig in, ask thoughtful questions, and, and begin building strong, respectful relationships with all parties involved.



Jill and Ken for seeing their case through to adoption!



CASA SPOTLIGHT

TRICIA CREAN

How long have you been a CASA and for how many kiddos have you advocated?

I have been a CASA for 4 years and have advocated for six children. Four of those cases ended in adoption or reunification. One case I was unable to complete due to circumstances out of my control. I currently am advocating for one child.

What drew you to volunteer for the CASA Program?

I am retired from a 42 year career in physical therapy. But, I still wanted to make a difference in the world. I am delighted to say I have found my place working with babies!



**TRICIA (ON RIGHT)
WITH DEB O. AT
FALL ADOPTION
DAY**

What has been your biggest challenge since becoming an advocate?

I think driving long distances when my kiddos have been moved out of the area. But I feel I need to make the effort because being a consistent presence in their lives is very important to this work.

What is most rewarding about being a CASA?

Seeing cases come to a positive resolution and knowing that Judge Young always has each child's best interest at heart. I never have to question her decisions.

Also, I immensely enjoyed being able to present one of my cases (no names of course) at the Festival of Trees last year in order to help donors understand what the CASA program is about and how we and the Yavapai CASA for Kids Foundation support children in foster homes.

What training (besides Academy) has been most helpful for you in your work as a CASA?

Definitely Motivational Interviewing (MI). It helped me to communicate with all parties involved in a case and help us all feel more comfortable about talking in an open and honest manner.

What advice would you give a new CASA?

Don't be afraid to ask questions and communicate often with your coordinator. You do not know it all after completing the pre-service training (and you never will) as each case is different and comes with its own challenges.

New Year's Resolutions for CASA Volunteers: Education, Self-Care, and Personal Growth

ASK
THE COORDINATOR

As a Court Appointed Special Advocate, you play a vital role in the life of a child navigating the complexities of the foster care and court systems. Your presence offers stability, advocacy, and hope at a time when children need it most. The start of a new year is an ideal moment to reflect on your journey and set intentions that will strengthen your advocacy and sustain your well-being. Here are three resolution ideas designed specifically for CASA volunteers involving education, self-care, and personal growth.

1. Commit to Ongoing Education

Staying informed is essential for advocating effectively. The child welfare system is always changing, and deepening your understanding can enhance both your confidence and your impact.

Complete CASA trainings. The CASA office offers training on trauma-informed advocacy, developmental stages, and special education issues. Reach out to your Coordinator if you would like to request a specific topic for training.

Read one book or research article each month related to child development, mental health, or the foster care system. Become familiar with community resources. Understanding local supports such as housing programs, counseling options, and other services will help you connect your CASA child with services that meet their needs.

Expand your cultural competence. Seek out learning opportunities that build awareness of the diverse backgrounds and experiences of the children you serve. By strengthening your knowledge base, you become an even more effective voice in court and a more informed support to the child you advocate for.

2. Prioritize Self-Care to Prevent Burnout

CASA work can be deeply rewarding, but it can also be emotionally intense. Advocates can be impacted by the stories of trauma, uncertainty, and disruption. Caring for yourself is not indulgent, it is necessary to continue showing up with empathy and clarity.

Commit to a specific self-care routine, whether it's a 30-minute walk, getting a good night's sleep, making healthy food choices, or a weekly hobby. Schedule it in your calendar and do not let your work override it.

Focusing on the positive impact you are having can combat feelings of helplessness and stress. Start a practice of daily journaling where you record at least one

small victory from your case, one moment of connection with your CASA child, or one thing you are grateful for outside of your volunteer work. Have a personal affirmation ready for hard days. Practice a phrase like, "I advocate for a child's best interests; I am not responsible for the outcome."

Seek peer support. Attend CASAs Connecting, meet with your Coordinator, or attend other CASA functions to share experiences and gain perspective.

Remember: you cannot pour from an empty cup. Your compassion is a powerful gift, protect it by nurturing yourself.



3. Lean Into Personal Growth

CASA work shapes not only the lives of the children you serve but also your own. Embracing personal growth helps you understand your strengths, transform challenges into insights, and deepen the relationships you build.

Reflect regularly on your advocacy journey. Set aside time to think about what you've learned, what surprised you, and what you hope to do differently next time.

Develop stronger communication skills. Practicing active listening, open-ended questioning, and strength-based language benefits both the child and the adults in their life. Say yes to new experiences. Whether it's taking on a case involving unfamiliar issues or participating in a community event, stepping outside your comfort zone builds confidence.

Celebrate your accomplishments. Acknowledge the small victories such as attending a difficult meeting, building trust with a youth, or successfully connecting a family with resources. Your willingness to grow not only enriches your advocacy but also inspires the children you represent.

Volunteering as a CASA is an act of profound service. By committing to continuous learning, practicing consistent self-care, and embracing personal growth, you strengthen your ability to advocate with clarity, compassion, and resilience. The children you serve deserve advocates who are informed, balanced, and evolving and you deserve a year filled with inspiration, wellness, and personal fulfillment.



**MATFORCE Message | Resiliency,
Stress Management and Self-Care**

**Presented by Nate Auvenshine,
Redeemed Training and
Consulting, LLC**

**Thursday, January 22, 2026
11:00 am to 12:00 pm
[virtual]**

**This course will give the attendee a
basic understanding of what stress
is, types of stress, how to identify
stress in their lives, the three
primary stages of stress, signs and
symptoms of stress, techniques for
building resiliency and capacity,
and basic tools to manage stress.
The emphasis will be on taking
care of ourselves so we can better
care for others.**

**Scan the QR code or visit:
qrco.de/bgNa5Z**



Youth Mental Health First Aid

*Facilitated by Ivy Chamberlin
Friday, January 30, 2026
8:30 AM - 3:30 PM*

REGISTRATION CLOSES 1/13/26

Youth Mental Health First Aid teaches you how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental health and substance use challenges among children and adolescents ages 12-18.

*This is a blended course. **Please note that 2 hours of online pre-work is required to be completed by January 25th in order to participate in the in-person course.***

*Class will be completed in person at
the Yavapai County Education
Service Agency
2970 Centerpoint E. Drive
Prescott, AZ*

**REGISTRATION is FREE and
required to attend**

Contact MATFORCE at (928)708-0100
or infor@matforceaz.org to register
today.

[learn more](#)



Nature Niños



2025-2026

10:00am - 12:00pm

One Saturday a month



Park Rangers and community partners lead child-centered play events at a different family friendly park each month. At every Nature Niños event there are take-home items, a healthy snack, creative nature activities, story time, all encouraging us to Leave No Trace and make Healthy Choices. Nature Niños events are led by Park Rangers and community partners with a strong understanding of child development and experience leading child-centered outdoor programs.

August 2nd

West Granite Creek

Splash Pad

350 N. Montezuma Street
Prescott, AZ 86301

September 6th

TEVA Community

Prescott National Forest

2900 N. Granite Basin Rd.
Prescott, AZ 86305

October 4th

Stricklin Park

1751 Sherwood Dr. Prescott,

November 1st

Pioneer Park

Kayla's Hands

1200 Commerce Drive
Prescott, AZ 86305

December

No event

Go explore with our
Junior Ranger Guidebook

January 3rd

Vista Park

1701 Sarafina Drive
Prescott, AZ 86301

February 7th

Community

Nature Center

1980 Williamson Valley Rd
Prescott, AZ 86305

March 7th

Watson Lake

Upper Ramada

3101 Watson Lake Drive
Prescott, AZ 86301

April 18th

Prescott Earth Day

Downtown Courthouse

120 S. Cortez Street
Prescott, AZ 86301

May 2nd

Goldwater Lake

Upper

2900 S. Goldwater Lake Road
Prescott, AZ 86303

June 6th

Granite Creek Park

554 6th Street
Prescott, AZ 86301

July 11th

Antelope Park

6933 N. Cattletrack Road
Prescott Valley, AZ 86314



CASAs Connecting

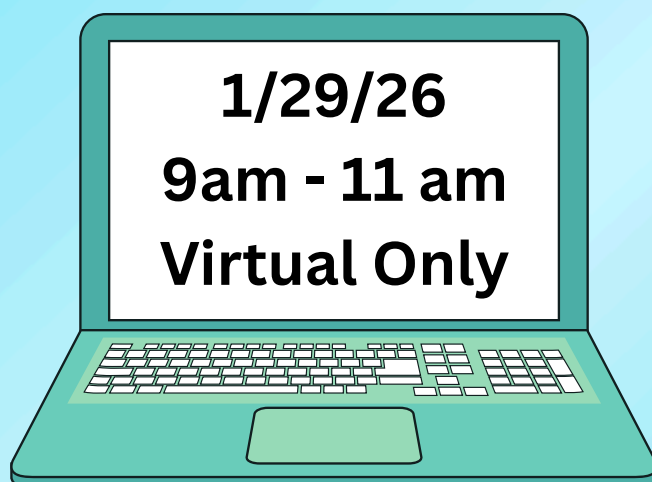


1/14/26

9am - 11 am

in person at the JJC

**Attend our
CASA Peer
Support Group
to help you be
more effective
on your case**



Watch your email for link to
this meeting during that week!

Because the work of a CASA is confidential, it is important to have a safe place to talk about your case.

ALL CASAs are highly encouraged to attend a CASA support group. This support group provides lively and informative discussions. The attendees include a mix of veteran and new CASAs and CASA staff. These discussions can help you understand system issues, procedures, identify needs and solve unanswered questions. CASAs Connecting qualifies for training hours!

Reunification Case Simulation: See the Child Welfare System Through the Eyes of a Parent

DATE: January 28, 2026

Juvenile Justice Center: 1100 Prescott Lakes Parkway

Two Sessions Offered in the Hearing Room:

10:00am–12:00pm or 1:30pm–3:30pm

Space Limited – Please indicate on your RSVP which session you are attending. RSVP to Jen Bahr at JBahr@courts.az.gov by January 21, 2026



Step into the heart of the child welfare system with Reunification Case Simulation, an immersive, facilitated experience.

Become a parent striving to reunite with your child, navigating multiple services, making life-altering decisions, and facing the challenges of multiple systems.

Walk a mile in their shoes, and see the world through their eyes.

DEPENDENCY 101 CLASS

PARENTING TIME VISITS AND CHILD DYSREGULATION

PLEASE JOIN US: JANUARY 29, 2026, 5:30PM TO 7:00PM
JUVENILE JUSTICE CENTER: 1100 PRESCOTT LAKES PARKWAY
RSVP TO JEN BAHR AT 928-554-8903 OR JBAHR@COURTS.AZ.GOV
BY JANUARY 26, 2026
TRAINING CERTIFICATES AND GAS GIFT CARDS AVAILABLE TO
PLACEMENTS WHO ATTEND



For children involved in dependency cases, visits with parents can bring up strong emotions, memories, and confusion connected to past trauma or unsafe situations. Even when a visit goes well, the child may feel a mix of love, fear, worry, and sadness that is overwhelming for their developing brain. For a child, transitions like starting visits and especially saying goodbye, are stressful, and many children try hard to hold it together during the visit, only releasing their built-up tension once they return to kinship or foster placement. Unfortunately, placements often are the ones who must cope with the child's behaviors as well as their own feelings, when these visits do not go well.

Please join us for a Q&A with Polara Health, DCS, and foster placements as we explore dysregulation and supporting children before, during, and after visits.

Childcare will be provided by DCS.
If needed, please indicate the number of
children when you RSVP.

Gas cards provided by
Yavapai CASA for Kids Foundation.





The Wrapped in Love (WiL) Diaper Bank provides diapers and supplies to struggling families across Yavapai County. Diapers are given to families through their affiliation with a service agency in the community. WiL promotes health and wellness by providing Yavapai County participants with diapers, wipes and referrals to local services. The overarching goal of WiL is to alleviate the cost of diapering and strengthen access to resources for struggling families in Yavapai County. The staff and volunteers at WiL coordinate with community agencies and family programs to ensure that needy families have access to the resources available to assist them in raising healthy children.

Yavapai County CASA Volunteers can request diapers for their foster or kinship families who are struggling to buy diapers.

If you would like to order diapers for your CASA baby's family, please contact your coordinator.

CELEBRATION!

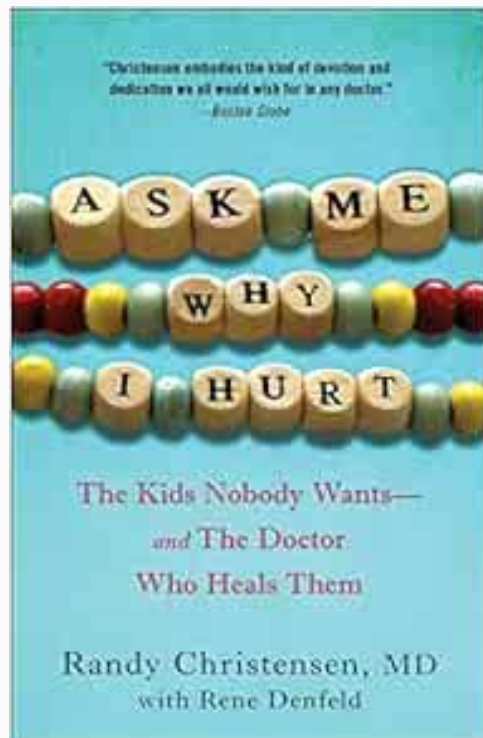
Gift Cards

Does your CASA kiddo have a birthday coming up? Get a great report card or improve in a class they were struggling with? Successfully complete potty training? Any other event or milestone?

Stop by the CASA office to pick up a Celebration Gift Card! Thank you YCFKF!

Book Club

Ask Me Why I Hurt: The Kids Nobody Wants and The Doctor Who Heals Them by Randy Christensen



The unforgettable inspiring memoir of one extraordinary doctor who is saving lives in a most unconventional way *Ask Me Why I Hurt* is the touching and revealing first-person account of the remarkable work of Dr. Randy Christensen. Trained as a pediatrician, he works not in a typical hospital setting but, rather, in a 38-foot Winnebago that has been refitted as a doctor's office on wheels. His patients are the city's homeless adolescents and children.

In the shadow of one affluent American city, Dr. Christensen has dedicated his life to caring for society's throwaway kids the often-abused, unloved children who live on the streets without access to proper health care, all the while fending off constant threats from thugs, gangs, pimps, and other predators. With the Winnebago as his moveable medical center, Christensen and his team travel around the outskirts of Phoenix, attending to the children and teens who need him most.

With tenderness and humor, Dr. Christensen chronicles everything from the struggles of the van's early beginnings, to the support system it became for the kids, and the ultimate recognition it has achieved over the years. Along with his immense professional challenges, he also describes the trials and joys he faces while raising a growing family with his wife Amy. By turns poignant, heartbreaking, and charming, Dr. Christensen's story is a gripping and rich memoir of his work and family, one of those rare books that stays with you long after you've turned the last page.

Books Available

IN THE CASA OFFICE



MEETING

**February 12, 2026
9:30am.
at the JJC**

CASA OF YAVAPAI COUNTY



LIKE US! FOLLOW US!

facebook

December in Yavapai County

9 New Cases filed

12 Children taken
into DCS custody

195 Total number of
children in DCS Care

78 Number of CASAs

95 Children with
a CASA

Kids who still
need a CASA **100**



Contact Information

www.casaofyavapaicounty.org

Prescott Office

(928) 771-3165

Amber Martin, Dependency Court Manager

email: amartin@courts.az.gov

Jessica Hines, Program Coordinator II

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Amy Fillingim, Program Coordinator II

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Joseph Nisse, Program Coordinator II

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Evelyn Hurtado, Admin Assistant I

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Robin Fernandez Ames, Support Staff

email: rfernanzesames@courts.az.gov

Kristi Newman (928) 771-3398

Family Treatment Court Coordinator

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Kathy McCormick, Mediator

email: kmccormi@courts.az.gov

Camp Verde Office

(928) 554-8900

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Program Coordinator I

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www.YavapaiCASAforKids.org

P.O. Box 28070

Prescott Valley, AZ 86312

(928)445-0800



**SUPPORT A CHILD
CHANGE A LIFE**

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Marlene Joy

**Yvonne Bartlett, Executive Director and
Interim contact for Grants for Kids Program**

Mona Stephens, Development

Questions about YC4KF?

email: info@yavapaicasaforkids.org