



Toy Industry Foundation

National CASA Association and Toy Industry Foundation

Continue Partnership to Benefit Abused Children

National Partnership focused on three toy events and grant to fund advocate training

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SEATTLE [May 1, 2014] – The National Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Association and the Toy Industry Foundation (TIF) announced today they are continuing their partnership focused on building hope and trust for children in the foster care system. The partnership is centered around three toy distribution events this summer and an additional \$200,000 grant from TIF to train more CASA volunteers.

“It is tremendous to see the largest toy manufacturers—companies that in other settings are competing—coming together in support of our kids,” said National CASA Association CEO Michael Piraino. “Support from the Toy Industry Foundation will help increase our services to children in need while bringing joy, comfort and hope directly to thousands of our most vulnerable citizens.”

As a result of the partnership, which began in 2013, more than 65,000 foster children have received toys. In addition, grant funds provided by the Toy Industry to National CASA and local CASA programs are helping to recruit and train needed CASA volunteers to stand up for the needs and rights of abused and neglected children. Each year, more than 600,000 children experience foster care. Just over 230,000 of them are assigned a CASA volunteer.

“For every child in foster care with a CASA volunteer, two others go it alone. Our goal is to reach the day that every child in need has a committed volunteer by their side,” says Piraino. “With partners like the Toy Industry Foundation we are moving toward our goal.”

CASA volunteers serve as trained volunteers who provide one-on-one advocacy and guidance for foster children waiting to be placed in permanent homes. The complicated foster care and family court systems are often confusing and frightening for children. CASA volunteers advocate for the best interests of the children they work with in both the courtroom and community. They work closely with judges to provide critical information on each case to ensure that each child’s rights and needs are being met.

“The Toy Industry Foundation is proud to continue our national partnership with CASA to serve children when they are most in need,” said Jean Butler, executive director, Toy Industry Foundation. “The work that CASA volunteers undertake as advocates, mentors and friends to children in the foster care system is essential. We are proud that our support will allow CASA to continue to add more advocates into the system, and that our toys will help put a smile on the faces of foster children and remind them that they are not forgotten.”

Toy distribution events will take place in three locations across the United States this summer. The first, the “Play Your Part” Day of Service will take place in the Los Angeles area on May 16, 2014. More than 150 volunteers from the toy industry will wrap toys and write notes to children in foster care. The gift packages will be distributed to 6,000 kids across Southern California. TIF and CASA will also host “Summer Fun Days” on June 19 and July 19, 2014, in Lowell, Ark., and Kansas City, Mo., respectively. Event attendees will include representatives from the local CASA programs, local toy industry members, and kids in the foster care system. Each event will feature fun activities and the distribution of toys to foster kids in the area.

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About National CASA Association

[Court Appointed Special Advocates \(CASA\) for Children](#) is a network of 933 community-based programs that recruit, train and support citizen-volunteers to advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children in courtrooms and communities. The only program of its kind, CASA volunteers are empowered by the courts to provide children with one-on-one advocacy. CASA volunteers see their assigned children regularly and interview all the adults who impact their lives. Volunteer advocates offer judges the critical information they need to ensure each child’s rights and needs are being attended to while in foster care, staying with the child until she is placed in a loving permanent home. For many abused children, their CASA volunteer is the only constant adult presence in their lives.

About Toy Industry Foundation

[The Toy Industry Foundation \(TIF\)](#) is a non-profit organization whose mission it is to bring joy, comfort, and learning to children in need through play. The Foundation currently fulfills its mission through core programs including The Toy Bank™ and grants to organizations whose missions are in line with that of the Toy Industry Foundation. The first industry-wide program of its kind, The Toy Bank receives donations of newly manufactured toys from members of the toy industry and distributes them through local charities to underserved, at-risk and homeless children throughout the United States and around the world.

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