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CHILD ADVOCATES OF SILICON VALLEY TO CELEBRATE 30 YEARS AT ANNUAL GALA

Milpitas, CA – May 12, 2016 – [Child Advocates of Silicon Valley](#) will hold its 30th anniversary gala celebrating CASA Heroes and Legends at Club Auto Sport on May 21, 2016. Key sponsors include Liz and Mike Byrd, [Palo Alto University](#), [Air Systems](#), [Maxim Integrated](#), Vilma Palette, Karen Scussel and Curt Riffle, Michelle and Manish Bhatia, Linda and Sean Brennan, Leslie Whitney and Joseph Cousins, Mala Jairam and Baskaran Iyer, [Morrison & Foerster Foundation](#), James and Maren Otieno, [Marc Rogers](#), [Wells Fargo Advisors](#), and [Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati Foundation](#).

Child Advocates recruits, trains and supports Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) to work one-on-one with foster children. CASAs provide critical emotional and educational support, ensuring that each child's needs are met and their voice is heard while navigating the dependency system. Since 1986, Child Advocates has served over 15,000 children with the support of 10,000-plus community volunteers.

Guests will enjoy scrumptious hors d'oeuvres and five entrée stations presented by [Catered Too](#) while sipping on wine generously donated from [Adobe Road Winery](#), [Wente Family Estates](#), [Rostai Family Winery](#), [Testarossa Winery](#), [Concannon Vineyards](#), [J. Lohr Vineyards and Wines](#), [Zayante Vineyards](#). A drawing and live auction will round out the event. Attendees can bid on anything from a trip to New York City to see the hit Broadway show Hamilton, to a condo stay in Portugal, to an Oakland A's box package, to a spa and wine tasting weekend in Napa. All proceeds from the event benefit foster children in Santa Clara County.

During the evening, the agency's impact on foster youth will be highlighted and six CASA Heroes and Legends will be honored for their transformative work that has helped impact the lives of thousands of foster youth in Santa Clara County. These individuals are: [Nora Manchester](#), co-founder of Child Advocates and the agency's first executive director; [Judge Leonard Edwards](#), retired Superior Court Judge and co-founder of Child Advocates; [Moe Whitaker](#), the first CASA volunteer and former CASA specialist; [Ann Whyte](#), former CASA, former CASA specialist and current CASA mentor; [Vilma Palette](#), former board member and recruiting and training coordinator; and [Kevin Gardner](#), former CASA volunteer and board member.



Donaisha, a former foster youth, now attending Spelman College, will also share her personal story and the impact her CASA volunteer had on her life.

“CASAs provide critical emotional and educational support to children in foster care, ensuring that each child’s needs are met and their voice is heard while they navigate the dependency system,” says Karen Scussel, Child Advocates’ executive director.

“Less than 60% of children foster care in California graduate from high school. But in our county, with a CASA, 80+% of these children complete their high school requirements and over 90% continue their education after high school. Donaisha is a tremendous example of the potential of our children when they have the guidance and support of a CASA.”

Child Advocates has an ambitious five-year strategic plan to provide a CASA for every child in the Santa Clara County foster care system by year-end 2018. Currently, there are more than 1,600 children in the Santa Clara County dependency system, 1,000 of which could benefit from a CASA. By June 2016, Child Advocates hopes to serve 780 children with a CASA volunteer.

About Child Advocates of Silicon Valley

Child Advocates is the only agency in Santa Clara County that provides Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) to foster youth. Because our volunteers are court-appointed, they can thoroughly research every aspect of a child’s case, including meeting teachers, doctors, social workers, counselors, biological family members and foster parents, thereby gaining a comprehensive perspective on what the child needs in order to thrive. CASAs assist their child in accessing needed resources, follow their school progress, and speak up for their child’s best interests in court. They maintain complete records about the case, submit reports and attend court hearings. CASA volunteers stay with their case until their child has a safe, loving home. Find out more about our CASA program at www.BeMyAdvocate.org.

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