Thank you for joining the Child and Adolescent Studies Student Association! This semester has been a successful one so far, filled with many events and opportunities. On behalf of your Executive Board, we are thankful to all of you for your dedication to CASSA and the community.

President Danielle Eden
Orange County Youth Center - Victoria Morales

This event was my very first event as a CASSA member and I felt it was completely worthwhile! I thought it was going to be more difficult; however, it really was not. As soon as we got there, we greeted everybody played a couple games. We also had workshops and skits for the students. I think this event was completely rewarding and it gave me a sense of how beneficial it is to be in a club and really participate in it. I would definitely enjoy going back and hopefully, inspire more students. One thing, that was interesting is how we were able to get connected with the students and show them how all of our lives are different, yet we all overcome our obstacles. I feel as if we really got our point across that they can overcome any obstacles.

CASSA Picnic - Samantha Carpenter

I had the privilege of taking part in CASSA’s first social outing for the fall semester. As a new member, I was nervous about going. I did not know anyone and was unsure of what CASSA even was and I was not even a CAS major. For me everything was new. When I arrived everyone was really welcoming and friendly. I got to talk to the president of CASSA and she was extremely helpful. I felt completely comfortable and learned a lot from former members. It was nice to be a part of a fun and inexpensive social outing to get to know other members. The CASSA picnic was a perfect first social event to break the ice.

Child Creativity Lab - Eman Asmar

The Child Creativity Lab was the first CASSA event I attended. Upon arriving to the event, I was greeted with smiles. I was so delighted to meet my fellow CASSA friends. We had some time to converse and get to know our team before beginning the event. As soon as the event started, all of the CASSA members were engaging with the children and families that came to attend the event. Seeing so many smiles on children’s faces was the greatest feeling. The moment that stood out to me the most was when a toddler that I was helping construct a flying device told me that it was the best day of her life. The feeling of being a part of an association that aids so many children and families is heartwarming. I have since been to more CASSA events and look forward to attending many more!
Mike and Molly TV Taping - Kalie Thomas

I had the awesome opportunity to go with six other CASSA members to the Mike and Molly TV taping in Burbank, CA. This was by far one of the most unique things I’ve done! We sat and watched Melissa McCarthy and other actors film live scenes right in front of us. While they were taking breaks or were behind the stage, there was a comedian that had our entire audience laughing for hours. He pulled a lot of us from the audience and made us do ridiculous things like dance or make animal sounds to the beats of techno music. It was honestly one of the most hilarious things I’ve experienced. We also had the opportunity to meet the actors and get their autographs after the taping! I would definitely pounce on any opportunity CASSA gave me to go to a live taping again. It would be great to revisit the Mike and Molly set, or go to a taping of any other show!

Bowling Social - Carolyn Vuong

CASSA’s bowling social was a great way to socialize and meet people! I met new members and caught up with old members! It was an amazing opportunity to get away from all the stress that college students go through mid semester. It is not a bad thing when you have an excuse to go out and have some fun. There was a potluck for this event so it helped members get energy through their system so they bring their game on! The best part about this event was being able to express our competitive side and also be silly around one another. We shared some great stories and captured wonderful memories to remember this night! The TSU Underground was a fantastic place for this event because we had many opportunities to be entertained such as bowling, playing with arcade games, playing foosball, and a lot of other fun activities! I’m glad I was a part of it, along with many other members who attended! It was a successful night.
THINK Together - Mayra Gardilla

This is the first event I have been to that allowed me to interact with elementary school children. First, I had the opportunity to interact with several children playing with the hula-hoops. At first, I did not know what to talk about, but these children were great at coming up with conversations. I even met a girl that had several things in common with me and it reminded me of my childhood. After a few minutes of conversation I saw that there were a group of children sitting in the shade. I decided to encourage them to get up and try the hula-hoop. A boy stood up and tried it. This made me really happy because I was able to motivate at least one child. These children were really sweet and had great personalities. The week was based on the movie Star Wars and I had the opportunity to help them create their own lifesabers using pool noodles, black tape, and duct tape. It was fun watching each child implement their own creativity into their lifesabers. What impressed me was that these children felt free to do what they wanted, even when the director of the program demonstrated a simple sample of her lifesaber. The children added their initials, or wanted the black tape to swirl around the foam worm, and others wanted the black tape to be wrapped around the middle of the noodle to make it seem like a double-sided lifesaber. It was a great experience, and I really enjoyed being proactive with the children.

Orangewood - Mia Salazar

I was unaware, yet excited for the experience I was walking into at the Children’s Home of Orangewood. Orangewood has a select community of children that I had never had the opportunity to interact with prior to the volunteer event. Upon arrival, various CASSA members supplied crafts to facilitate festive Halloween activities and engagement with the children. The children were overjoyed to participate. The staff was nurturing to the students, and helpful to CASSA members. Although I was skeptical about stepping out of my comfort zone, I would strongly urge others who enjoy working with youth to get involved with this institution. It changed my perspective of this community of students immensely and for that I am thankful.
CHOC Walk - Emily Flynn

CHOC Walk was one of my favorite CASSA events that I have participated in. It was so early but everyone had so much energy you wouldn't think it was 5 am. Despite the early morning and crowded park, it was a blast. We all screamed our CASSA cheers as we walked through the park and we didn't lose any energy going through the walk. The 5k walk brought us through both parks where we saw the characters and crew members cheering us on. I really loved the enthusiasm of everyone involved. It made me excited to continue to do events with CASSA.

Child Guidance Center - Karen Macias

I felt truly honored to be part of the Children Family Fun Day. I was able to help out and collaborate with different things such as: recruiting local Santa Ana families, checking the children in and most importantly playing with them. The purpose of the event was to show children how fun being and staying active can be; this was also beneficial for parents to see. Many children tend to become overweight due to the lack of exercise. Here the parents saw what little is required of them to continuously provide an active lifestyle for their children. I liked that the parents were able to see how much fun their children were having and how excited they were to show off their odometer with hundreds (thousands) of steps they had accomplished. Sometimes we don't realize how crucial exercising is. I'm glad parents were there to witness it all and hopefully provide a similar active environment for their children at home. Being active and running around with the children also reminded me of why I should be active again. I, also interacted with other CASSA members; we shared our experiences being in the club and what we plan to do in the future. All in all, it was a great experience and I would definitely volunteer again.
Girls Inc. - Emily Gelvezon

I have attended other events for CASSA this semester, but the Girls Inc. event has been my favorite thus far. As someone who is all about female empowerment, it was a great experience to visit an organization that encourages young girls to explore different activities without feeling restricted by their gender. Girls Inc. has a mural that depicts various images of women as a firefighter, astronaut, and an athlete. The mural reads, “Inspiring all girls to be... strong, smart, & bold,” and I could really tell the staff tried to show girls of the program that they possess these qualities. While I was there, I observed the girls playing hockey with the staff, and they were really giving it their all. One of the girls was dressed in a pink dress, but she did not let it stop her from getting dirty and enjoying the game. My favorite part of the event was being able to see all the girls interact with everyone without inhibition or fear of judgement, and having the opportunity to share that experience with them. Girls Inc. provides young girls with a safe space, and I am very glad I attended this event.
Guest Speaker: Ketlyn Henry, America on Track - Ashley Reyes

CASSA's first guest speaker, Ketlyn Henry from America on Track visit. While viewing a power point, she described the purpose and mission of the organization with examples from mentors. Hearing about the organization, and how it helps connect children in the community to mentors was a life changing experience, making me want to become a mentor. Since her visit, I have applied to be a mentor and have gone through the interviewing process. I am now awaiting to be paired with a mentee and look forward to help better the life of a youth in my community.

Guest Speaker: Heather Guay - Gaby Leanos

CASSA's second speaker was Heather Guay came and spoke with CASSA members. One may wonder who is Heather Guay. Well, Heather is a CSUF counseling professor, an elementary school teacher, and the founder of the organization Namaste Nepal. As soon as Heather began to speak I knew I wanted to hear what she said. She had so much energy, attitude, and spoke with a purpose. As her presentation went on I grew impressed at how much she has accomplished. Heather Guay is a person to look up to and I enjoyed hearing her talk so much. I would go to another one of her presentations in a heart beat.

Guest Speaker: Charity Vasquez, Child Life Specialist - Ashley Evans

Charity Vasquez, a child life specialist and professor here on campus, recently served as a guest speaker for CASSA. Charity Vasquez was full of useful information for CASSA members. She explained concepts including the definition of a child life specialist, the specific requirements needed for such a career, and the personal and professional benefits gained. CASSA members listened intently as Charity Vasquez presented a detailed PowerPoint presentation as well as shared her personal stories and experiences she experienced as a child life specialist. As the presentation concluded, Charity opened the floor up for questions. Child life specialists are often underrepresented and/or unrecognized, I was grateful for the opportunity to learn more about what exactly child life specialists are, and their contributions to the child and adolescent development field.

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