Thank you for joining and continuing the Child and Adolescent Studies Student Association! This semester has been a remarkable one so far, filled with many community service, professional development, and social events! On behalf of your Executive Board, we truly appreciate all of you for the time and effort that you put in to CASSA and the community. Keep up the extraordinary work!

- Danie Eden, Executive President
Volunteering at the Illumination Foundation Valentine’s Day event was so much fun! I have heard of this wonderful program, but I did not know what the program did. I learned more than I knew before. The activity that CASSA did with the children was a huge hit. Some children loved it so much that they ended up making more than one heart hug. I enjoyed helping the children show their creativity. Some of the children surprised me with their creativity, decorating the heart hug in ways that I did not even think of. I definitely enjoyed volunteering for the Illumination Foundation Valentine’s Day event and would do it again!

Orangewood, February - Amanda Nichols

Our visit to Orangewood was the first one of the Spring semester. It took place right before Valentine’s Day, so all our activities and the center’s decorations were themed. I was surprised to see the amount of effort and care that went into decorating the gym for the children; there was even a DJ booth set up to play everyone’s favorite songs! The crafts and games provided by CASSA group members were great icebreakers to get to know the kids better. While it took some time for them to open up, I think each member was able to have a meaningful one on one conversation with the children. The biggest thing that I noticed was how the children seemed like a family. They all knew each other well and seemed happy to have one another. At one point, they even started giving each other the crafts we all made and dancing together. Going to Orangewood with CASSA was an enlightening and heartwarming experience. I really enjoyed getting to know the different children as well as my fellow club members. I would highly suggest the opportunity to anyone interested in working with children!
Second Harvest, February - Amber Malik

When I arrived at the Second Harvest event, one of the event’s supervisors came out and told us what we are going to do for the time that we were there. While listening to her talk about their mission, I was saddened to learn about the underserved people. I am very grateful to have this opportunity to help the unfortunate in our community. My responsibility was to look for expired bread and pack the unexpired bread into boxes. I really enjoyed this event because I knew that what I was doing was for a great cause. It was also enjoyable meeting other members from CASSA! This event has really motivated me to volunteer more of my time to community service to help more of the underserved population. I will absolutely come back to this event again. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to attend!

Incredible Edible Farm, February - Jessica Swanson

Volunteering at Incredible Edible Farm with CASSA was an amazing experience. Spending our time harvesting crops to help end hunger in our community made a difference in my life as well as the people who we were providing for. It was awesome to see how many children came out to help and volunteer their time on the weekend. It just proves that if people come and work together, we can make a difference in the world. Doing something so small and making such a great impact in others’ lives really does motivate you to keep volunteering with this organization. Knowing that we were able to provide over 300,000 pounds of produce for families in need in our community was incredible! I am so thankful for my experience at Incredible Edible Farm and I cannot wait to go back!
Some of the CASSA members had the marvelous opportunity to help out at the Miller’s Children Hospital in Long Beach, a hospital that provides care and treatment for many children ages 0 to 18 years old. CASSA members were given badges with personal photo ID’s. The CASSA members were then divided into two smaller groups to be placed into two different play rooms. From the experience in one of the playrooms, I can say that the children and volunteers were both happy to have each other’s company. In the playroom we interacted with two children while doing a fun arts and craft project and playing a video game with one of the patients. At the end we were both sad to see each other leave (patient and volunteer). We both left with a smile and the knowledge of the impact on one another’s lives. Definitely an unforgettable experience!

Girl’s Inc. Conference - Jane Lee

Having previously volunteered with CASSA at their Santa Ana location, I wanted to explore and support the mission and opportunities Girls Inc. provided girls and young women from predominantly low-income areas. The Girls Inc. staff were just as supportive of the volunteers as they were of the girls they interacted with. The staff had energy and kindness that motivated us as we set up the food and beverage tables for breakfast and lunch, helped prep several activity rooms, and guided the girls towards the appropriate stations. Luckily for us, we were allowed to listen to the keynote speakers for the conference, Lauren Parsekian and Molly Thompson, who shared a powerful message of encouraging and being kind to one another as girls and women. Not only were girls opening up and apologizing, sharing, and going through the healing process before our very eyes, but I was also inspired to show kindness and support for the females in my life. I had come to learn more about Girls Inc. and support the girls and the conference programs but left with much more: a greater appreciation for the future generations of women and a reminder of the power of kindness amongst girls.
Heart and Stroke Walk - Tanya Tellez

I attended my very first 5k walk for the American Heart Association. Not only was it my first walk, but this was the first event I attended for CASSA. I was lucky enough to take my daughter to this heart warming event. I was amazed at how many people showed up that day and represented someone they loved that has suffered or passed away from heart problems. That made me feel accomplished that my donations and walk went to a great cause. In addition to the 5k walk there were various booths and activities that were available for us. I got so much out of this experience and walked away feeling satisfied, happy, proud, and thankful. If I were to rate this experience I would give it a 10 out of 10. In fact, I enjoyed it so much that since this walk I have already completed my second walk and signed up for one more.

Orangewood, March - Cynthia Zambrano

On March 4th, I was given the opportunity to volunteer at Orangewood Children’s Home in Orange County. Before arriving to this event, I prepared an activity to work on with the children. The theme for this activity was St. Patrick’s Day so I decided I would make rainbow catchers with the children. I took a variety of materials for the children to work with and they ended up making the rainbow catchers as well as other crafts such as making bracelets. The children laughed, they were full of energy, and ready for what we had to offer. Going to this event made me feel very happy that they enjoyed our presence. While we walked, I was able to talk to the director about what he has done there at Orangewood for the children as well as how the children feel being there. It is not easy for the children. The director explained to me how the children are going through an emotional time and that he was glad that we are able to come and volunteer. He also talked to me about a couple of job opportunities that they offer and told me about some things he has done at Orangewood for the past 20 years. I am so glad that I was able to meet the director and talk to him personally, but most of all I am grateful I had the opportunity to interact with these wonderful children. It was such a great experience and I would definitely go back again to volunteer.
Teaching Tomorrow’s Teachers Conference - Hana Lee

I had the pleasure of revisiting my passion for teaching, and reassuring my purpose for entering the education field during the Teaching Tomorrow’s Teachers Conference. The conference highlighted Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence and the different strategies to enhance each area of intelligence to help promote students’ learning. I attended four workshops, “Getting started with engineering,” “Growth mindset for an effective and productive classroom,” “Building to the multiple intelligences,” and “STEM + Creativity = 21st Century learning.” Through the workshops, I participated in activities that implemented interdisciplinary teaching within a single lesson plan. I found all the workshops very engaging, motivating, and fun! These skills will help me become a more effective educator in the future. In addition to learning useful techniques, I enjoyed networking with future educators and veteran teachers. I appreciated the experience of talking to other professionals who share my passion, and it felt reassuring to know that there are so many wonderful people and resources in this field. Overall, I had a great time at TTT Conference as an aspiring teacher, and I plan on attending this professional growth opportunity as a CSUF alumni in the future!

Miller’s Children’s Hospital, March - Sady Whittle

My group was sent to one of the hospital’s playrooms to do crafts and mingle with the patients. It was not easy for all of the patients to leave their rooms, so we only had about five children come through the playroom that day. This experience really touched me and opened my eyes to the lack of simplicity in the lives of some of these children. Sadly, they have many things to worry about, and playing is not always their main focus. The hospital staff was very helpful and tried to make the children feel as comfortable as possible. While we were there we colored and made bracelets with anyone who wanted to participate. It was nice to see that the children were enjoying themselves and laughing with us about silly things. I would definitely go back to Miller’s Children’s Hospital, because of CASSA being there can make the kids smile for a while, it is more than worth the trip.
Orange County Youth Center - Natalie Flores

When I chose the Orange County Youth Center event, I went in not knowing anything about the program. After attending this event I learned so much about this wonderful organization. Even though the program was small you could easily see that the staff had the best intentions in helping these young adults finish school. When first arriving, the teacher asked us if we could introduce ourselves to the entire class as well as give additional information about ourselves such as: any hardships we had to overcome, our majors, our career paths, and why we chose Cal State Fullerton. After the introductions we split the students into groups and from there we did relationship building exercises, assisted them in the college application process, spoke to them about helpful services on campus, and performed skits that helped explain “the everyday life of a college student”. Towards the end the students were allowed to ask us any questions related to college. I was happy to hear that the students had so many questions about college and happier that we were able to answer them. Overall, working with these students was an eye opening experience and I would love if CASSA returned to the Orange County Youth Center.

‘Baby Daddy’ TV Taping - Lucia Cortez

As soon as I read the e-mail about the possibility of attending the Baby Daddy TV taping, I was excited! I am a fan of the show that airs on Freeform (previously ABC Family), and the thought of actually going to see a TV taping sounded like a once in a lifetime opportunity. I was unsure of what to expect and as soon as we were admitted, I saw the actual living room and kitchen where most of the scenes took place. We were the audience of the show; our actual laughs and enjoyment was what helped make the show happen! There was an entertainer who had us on our feet throughout the four hours of being there; he had us laughing, singing, and dancing between scenes. I felt lucky to see how it all takes place, the director directing the show, the cast, and the cuts. At the end of the taping, we were able to shake hands with some of the cast and I was even able to get some autographs which I was extremely pleased about! This will be an experience I will never forget. Now when I watch TV shows where there is a laughing audience in the background, I am reminded of the experience I had at CBS Studios for the Baby Daddy TV taping through CASSA.
Guest Speaker: Marissa Presley, HEART Campaign - Cynthia Acevedo

We had the opportunity to have guest speaker Marissa Presley from Laura’s House come in to talk to CASSA members about the H.E.A.R.T. campaign. Laura’s House aims to help individuals that are survivors of domestic violence. The H.E.A.R.T. campaign, which stands for Healthy Emotions & Attitudes in Relationships Today, was created to inform children and teens who are at-risk of experiencing domestic violence about healthy relationships and how to prevent violence. Her presentation was a very eye-opening experience that I personally feel has had an impact on how I view domestic violence. She not only talked about the experience of survivors she knows through Laura’s House but she also talked about what she experienced as a survivor herself. She also talked about the domestic violence experiences that we have heard fairly recent in popular culture, such as Chris Brown’s abuse towards Rihanna and NFL player Ray Rice’s violent assault on his fiancé. The thing that hit me the most was when she used the current members in the room as a representation of the statistics; it showed just how common domestic violence is. I would love to have Marissa present to CASSA again in the future to provide us with more information on all of the services Laura’s House provides.

Guest Speaker: Melody Jamarillo, Ronald McDonald Charity House - Eman Asmar

CASSA’s meeting with guest speaker Melody Jaramillo was one of my favorite meetings that I have attended this Spring. She was very passionate about what she does for the children and families at the Ronald McDonald House. Melody kept her audience engaged and was very relatable. Her story resonated with me and my personal experiences in regards to how I came about choosing a career path. In addition to discussing her inspiring journey, she taught us about voicemail etiquette and the importance of making a good first impression. Melody truly opened my eyes to being more involved and volunteering for such a wonderful charity like the Ronald McDonald Charity House.