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### **Sharks Foundation Honored At Child Advocates' Annual Gala *Former Foster Youth Shares His Personal Story***



**Milpitas, CA – March 30, 2017 –** [Child Advocates of Silicon Valley](#) honored the [Sharks Foundation](#) on March 25<sup>th</sup> for their [Goals for Kids program](#) dedicated to enhancing the lives of underserved youth and families in the community. Approximately 300 guests attended the event, which raised more than \$375,000 to benefit foster youth in Santa Clara County.

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 more than 16,000 children with the support of 10,000-plus community volunteers.

"Tonight, we honor one of our community leaders and a significant donor, the Sharks Foundation and thank them for investing in our community," said Karen Scussel, executive director of Child Advocates of Silicon Valley. Ken Caveney, Sharks VP of Finance and a Sharks Foundation board member accepted the award.

Child Advocates has been one of half a dozen nonprofits fortunate to receive funding from their Goals for Kids program. For each San Jose Sharks goal scored during a home game, over \$1,000 is donated to be distributed to programs that serve the community. The Goals for Kids program started three years ago, a collaboration between the Sharks, Taube Philanthropies and the Koret Foundation. In the first two years, Goals for Kids contributed more than \$97,000 to Child Advocates. To date, the Goals for Kids program has raised over \$725,000 for local nonprofits.



"With the climate of uncertainty surrounding programs that help underserved children, it is vitally important that foster children – our community's most vulnerable population – have a caring, stable adult in their lives," Scussel, said. "This fiscal year, approximately 650 of Child Advocates' CASAs will provide more than 840 foster children with that safety net."

One of the evening highlights was when Pierre, a former foster youth, shared his personal story and the impact his CASA volunteers, Mike Bowman and Harvey Fox had on his life. Pierre met his CASAs after entered foster care when he was 10 years old.

"Harvey and Mike helped me identify a better path. They're still in my life today," Pierre said. He ended his speech by quoting Arthur Ashe: "From what we get, we can make a living; what we give, however, makes a life."

Guests enjoyed listening to live music by [Gemini Jazz](#) while sampling wines provided by [EmmaLily Vineyards](#), [Kathryn Kennedy Winery](#), [Hendry Winery](#), [House Family Vineyards](#), [Thackrey & Company Wine Makers](#), and [Testarossa Winery](#).

[Catered Too](#) presented a savory family style dinner paired with wine donated by [Concannon Vineyards](#) and [J. Lohr Vineyards and Wines](#). Audio and Visual effects were generously donated by [AVT Productions](#).

A drawing and live auction rounded out the event. Attendees bid on anything from a two-night stay in Paso Robles – to Warriors and Sharks tickets – to a one-week stay in Mexico. Tori Votino, Miss Santa Clara, whose platform involves advocating for underserved youth like foster children, assisted with the drawing.

Key sponsors included Liz and Mike Byrd, [Palo Alto University](#), Karen Scussel and Curt Riffle, [Maxim Integrated](#), Vilma Pallette, [Burr Pilger Mayer](#), [Fish & Richardson](#), Mala Jairam and Bask Iyer, Nikki King and the Honorable Donald B. King, Becky Manchester Aidlberg and Gil Aidlberg, [Marc Rogers, Wells Fargo Advisors](#), and [Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati Foundation](#).

### **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](http://www.BeMyAdvocate.org).