

**FRONT PAGE**

**CASA: 15 Years of Court Advocacy for Butte County Youths**

**Page 2**

**CASA cont.**

**Page 3**

**Woman's Hospital Bed Video**

**Shows a Side of Domestic Violence We Need to See**

**Page 4**

**1 in 4 College Women Are Victims of Unwanted Sexual Contact, Survey Finds**

**Page 5**

**1 in 4 College Women cont.**

**Page 6**

**Judge Throws Out Kesha's Sex Assault Claims Against Producer 'Dr. Luke'**

**BACK PAGE**

**HAPPENINGS**

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# FOCIS NEWSLETTER

## MAY 2016

### CASA: 15 Years of Court Advocacy for Butte County Youths

By Kyra Gottesman, Correspondent [www.chicoer.com](http://www.chicoer.com)

This year marks the 15th anniversary of Butte County Court Appointed Special Advocates, a volunteer program that pairs abused and neglected children with an adult advocate.

To mark its anniversary, CASA is hosting a gala fundraiser themed after the classic movie "Casablanca." The event includes dinner, a no-host bar, casino games and dancing, as well as live and silent auctions. Tickets are \$75 per person.

CASA operates under the 501(c)3 of Northern Valley Catholic Social Services and is funded through donations and the Butte County Judicial Council.

"Our mission is to speak in the courts for the best interests of the kids," said Lisa Michels, program supervisor.

A CASA volunteer is trained as a sworn officer of the court. A CASA volunteer is responsible for researching and gathering information, monitoring and advocating for progress on the case plan, submitting written reports to the court, and advocating for the child in court and in meetings involving family, teachers, social workers and other professionals.

CASAs are involved in all aspect of the child's life. They spend time with the child, and are able to report back to the judge a different perspective than the other professionals.

"Their job is just to be with the child without an agenda," said Michels. "Other people have professional agendas when it comes to the child. The CASA learns about the whole child and advocates for what they need."

# CASA cont.

## THE NUMBERS

At any given time 500 children, infant to 19 years, are in foster placement in Butte County. The attorneys and social workers that represent these children are “overwhelmed” by the number of cases they have, said Michels.

“Each attorney can have 300 to 400 cases. Children don’t have a strong one-on-one advocate. The child’s voice needs to be out there, needs to be heard by the judge. That’s where a CASA comes in,” said Michels.

With 52 CASA volunteers, the program is only able to serve 75-100 children annually.

“We have a lot of really dedicated volunteers that just amaze me with what they do, but we need more. There are so many kids who don’t have an advocate, especially in the south county Gridley area. We just have one CASA there,” said Michels.

The statistics for foster children are grim. Forty percent of children who age out of the foster system become homeless within 18 months and 80 percent of the state’s prison population have been foster children, according to Michels.

“One way to get and keep these numbers down is through early intervention. When a foster child has someone who takes an interest in them and their case specifically, a one-on-one personal interest, the chances of them becoming homeless or imprisoned decreases drastically,” said Julia Westlund, a 10-year veteran CASA. During her decade as a CASA, Westlund has advocated for three children ages 8 to 14.

“As a volunteer you are asked to make at least a one-year commitment to the child, but once you know a child you stay with them for the duration, until they are headed down the right path. My last case was five years,” said Westlund.

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Sometimes the CASA is the only consistent adult in a child’s life.

“We had a child assigned a CASA and in three weeks the little guy was moved to a new foster home, a new school and got a new social worker,” said Michels. “His CASA knew him better than anyone else in his life. So many people change in these kids’ lives. Often the CASA is the only consistent one. We hold their histories.”

Background checks are run on all prospective volunteers. They are also required to attend 40 hours of initial training plus an additional 12 hours of training annually.

Following the training and assignment of a child, most CASA’s spend between eight and 10 hours a month volunteering. Most of that time is spent with the child, getting together to “hang out” or doing fun activities. The CASA is also required to write short monthly summaries for the judge about the overall well being of the child and twice a year, a full report for the court.

## **Woman's Hospital Bed Video Shows a Side of Domestic Violence We Need to See**

**"It affects people you know, cheerful people, people who sing, people who love."**

**By Taylor Pittman, Voices Staff Writer, [www.huffingtonpost.com](http://www.huffingtonpost.com)**

**One woman has sent a powerful message about domestic violence with a video she filmed in a hospital room as her medium.**

**Facebook user Darrian Amaker posted a video on the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence's Facebook page. The video featured Amaker in a hospital bed singing about domestic abuse. She wrote, in her post, that someone she referred to as "my love" abused her a few days after Thanksgiving.**

**"He had planned it out; I was supposed to die," she wrote. "I survived or escaped, whatever you want to call it, and spent four days in the hospital, eyes swollen shut, wondering why, wondering why."**

**Amaker, who described herself as a singer, writer and photographer in the post, stressed that domestic violence "is not a faraway issue." "It affects people you know, cheerful people, people who sing, people who love," she wrote. "We the humans must be better, kinder, stronger. We the loving must not tolerate abuse. We the living must facilitate life."**

**The post has been liked more than 2,300 times and has received several encouraging comments. "You are so, so brave for sharing this. Please keep on shining," one Facebook user wrote. The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence also shared its support for Amaker in a post.**

**"Once again a courageous survivor has spoken up and removed the cloak of secrecy from domestic violence," the post reads. "We support her and other survivors as they move to regain their voices. It can be very empowering." Amaker echoed that sentiment in her post, where she described her song and message as "a small triumph."**

**"I don't generally record videos of myself but it was the only thing I wanted to do in the hospital," she wrote. "I insisted, it felt important and a small triumph to make something, salvage anything from my shipwrecked heart."**

***Need help? In the U.S., call 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)  
for the National Domestic Violence Hotline.***

# **1 in 4 College Women Are Victims of Unwanted Sexual Contact, Survey Finds**

**A new survey of 27 campuses shows that sexual assault is a pervasive problem**

By Eliza Gray [time.com](http://time.com)

**A new survey of students at 27 universities found that nearly 1 in 4 undergraduate women were victims of unwanted sexual contact, either because they were forced or because they were incapacitated by drugs or alcohol. The results of the survey, conducted by the Association of American Universities were consistent with many other similar surveys of college students.**

**Sexual assault on college campuses has captured widespread public attention over the past several months, thanks in part to the Obama Administration's efforts to shed light on the pervasive problem.**

**The survey collected responses to online questionnaires from 150,000 graduate and undergraduate students, a roughly 19% response rate out of 779,170 students who were asked to participate.**

**Though the rates of unwanted sexual contact were nearly a quarter, they ranged widely by institution, with some institutions showing rates as low as 13% and others as high as 30%. Private schools showed slightly higher rates of sexual misconduct than public schools among undergraduates. The schools that participated in the survey are some of the most prominent public and private institutions in the U.S., including Harvard, Yale, the Ohio State University and the University of Florida.**

**Across all 27 campuses, the most serious form of unwanted sexual contact, forcing sex while the victim was incapacitated, was reported by 10.8% of undergraduate women, and more than 12% for students who identified as transgender, genderqueer, nonconforming or questioning.**

# 1 in 4 College Women Are Victims of Unwanted Sexual Contact, Survey Finds, cont.

Freshmen were more likely than seniors to be victims of unwanted sexual contact, which includes penetration and sexual touching.

The survey showed low rates of reporting among students, a problem that many colleges have worked hard to address over the past several months. Reporting rates varied widely by institution. Reporting penetration by physical force, for example, ranged from a low of 17% to a high of 46%. The most common reason for not reporting across all institutions, given by more than half of respondents, was because they didn't consider it "serious enough." A third were "... embarrassed, ashamed or [thought] it would be too emotionally difficult."

The survey was unlike the other highly publicized college sexual misconduct surveys in that it asked students about the "absence of affirmative consent." The standard of affirmative consent, also known as "yes means yes" rather than the previous standard of "no means no", has become a more common definition for sexual misconduct at universities. In September 2014, California passed a law that requires schools in the state to establish a standard of "yes, means, yes," across all universities in the state, requiring students to get positive consent from a partner before engaging in sexual activity. New York State passed a similar law.

The AAU survey defined affirmative consent as "active, ongoing voluntary agreement," and used examples of unwanted sexual contact such as someone "[initiating] sexual activity despite your refusal," "ignoring your cues to stop or slow down," and "went ahead without checking in or while you were still deciding." More than 11% of undergraduate females reported experiencing this kind of sexual contact.

# Judge Throws Out Kesha's Sex Assault Claims Against Producer 'Dr. Luke'

BY PHIL HELSEL WWW.NBCNEWS.COM

A New York judge dismissed pop singer Kesha's sexual assault claims against her producer, ruling that the allegations don't rise to the level of human rights crimes.

Kesha, who shot to fame with the 2010 hit "Tik Tok," claimed that her producer Lukasz "Dr. Luke" Gottwald drugged and sexually assaulted her, and physically and verbally tormented her for a decade. Gottwald has never been charged and has denied the claims.

Manhattan State Supreme Court Justice Shirley Werner Kornreich ruled Wednesday that the abuse claims can't go forward because they happened outside of New York and the statute of limitations expired. The judge also ruled the claims don't prove any alleged violence "was motivated by gender animus" under hate crime laws.

"Every rape is not a gender-motivated hate crime," Kornreich said in the ruling. "Her claims of insults about her value as an artist, her looks, and her weight are insufficient to constitute extreme, outrageous conduct intolerable in civilized society," the judge wrote.

Kesha sued Gottwald, Sony Music Entertainment and Kemosabe Records seeking to be released from the contract. Gottwald sued her for breach of contract. A judge in February denied Kesha's bid to end the contract. Kesha's attorneys have appealed that ruling. Music stars like Taylor Swift and Adele have come to the singer's defense and supported her. Attorneys for Kesha and Sony did not immediately return a message seeking comment.

Gottwald signed Kesha in 2005. In 2013, after "Tik Tok" went platinum and the 2012 release of "Warrior," Kesha stopped working with Dr. Luke and said she was being denied royalties, according to court documents.

The alleged abuse took place in California. Kesha filed a complaint in that state under statutes including, among others, gender violence. Attorneys for Kesha argued that Gottwald and the other defendants discriminated against her based on her gender in violation of human rights laws, and other claims under laws against gender-motivated violence.

Gottwald is a Grammy-nominated songwriter and producer who has worked with Britney Spears, Kelly Clarkson and many others. Gottwald has denied ever having sex with Kesha. In February 2016, he said on Twitter: "Kesha and I were friends for many years and she was like my little sister."

# HAPPENINGS

## ANGER MANAGEMENT GROUP

Wednesdays, 6-7:30pm. Co-ed six week group, start date contingent upon sign-ups. must be a FRTH registered patient. Full attendance required for a certificate. \$40 fee for non-native clients. (No couples & NOT for Court Mandates). Contact Tom @ 532-6811, ex 270

## POSITIVE PARENTING & POSITIVE PARENTING OF TEENS

is done on an individual basis as space and time allow. \$30 fee for non-native clients. For info or sign up, Contact Mark @ 532-6811 ex 249.

## FOCIS DOMESTICE VIOLENCE WOMEN'S SUPPORT GROUP

Women's Support Group Tuesdays 3 p.m. to 5p.m. Self-validation & processing of abusive relationships. Intake assessments must be done before entry into the group. For info, contact Brittany@ FOCIS PROGRAM, 532-6811 ex 270.

## BRAVE AT HEART CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

For anyone who has been touched by Cancer Meetings every 3rd Wednesday starting Feb 17th 2016 6:30 to 7:30 pm Call Ashley, 532-6811 ex.272

## GUYS TAKE CHARGE GROUP

Thursday afternoons, 3:30 to 4:30 Guys from 10 to 13 are invited For info or sign-up call Ashley, 532-6811 ex 272

## THURSDAY CRAFT GROUP

Explore both Modern & Traditional forms of beadwork. Thursday afternoons from 3:00pm to 5:00pm in the South Conference room, call Mark @ 532-6811 ex 249. for info or sign up.

## RED ROAD TO WELLBRIETY MEETING

For those that have suffered alcoholism and drug addiction and other forms of

self-defeating behaviors, you can walk the 12 steps of the Red Road to recovery.

**WEEKLY MEETINGS ON WEDNESDAY @ 6.00 PM**

**@ FEATHER RIVER TRIBAL HEALTH**

**530-534-5394**

**EVERYONE IS WELCOME!**

## LOCAL DV SERVICES

### FOCIS PROGRAM SERVICES

Advocacy Services, Restraining Order assistance, court accompaniment, Community education and in-service training, Crisis intervention services, Women's Talking Circles, Resource information & referral service. Feather River Tribal Health 530-534-5394 ext. 270

### Catalyst DV Services

24-hour hotline for DV intervention & referrals, Emergency Shelter, Children's Program at HAVEN, Transitional Housing & Household establishment Drop-in centers, Individual counseling, Support groups, Restraining Order assistance & Court Accompaniment, Community Outreach. 24-Hour Hotline 800-895-8476 Oroville Drop-in Center 530-532-6427

### SHARP (Self Help and Referral Program)

Self Help center that provides general assistance to people who do not have attorneys. Assistance is provided in the areas of family law, guardianships, evictions, small claims, name changes, and restraining orders. 1675 Montgomery Street Oroville, 530-532-7015



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