

# Woman with a Heart for Bakersfield

## Colleen McGauley



Advocates (CASA) of Kern County, where she serves as Executive Director.

Colleen has been with CASA since 1994 and has donated literally thousands of hours as an advocate, serving 14 children. In fact, she was the first CASA volunteer in Kern County to appear in court, and continues to serve as a CASA volunteer. Colleen became an employee of the organization in 1996 and became its director in 2001. The organization has more than doubled both the number of active volunteers and the number of abused children served annually under Colleen's leadership. Colleen's work has received statewide recognition and is utilized by CASAs throughout California.

Her leadership extends outside of her passion for children, as demonstrated by how Colleen supports other nonprofit organizations with a similar sense of advocacy: always encouraging others to be imaginative, inspirational and professional. Said of Colleen, "She is a wonderful steward of philanthropic funds that are designated for programs she oversees, setting a standard for others to follow." Seeking to strengthen nonprofits individually and as a whole, Colleen has assisted the leaders of many nonprofit organizations within—and outside of—Kern County.

More than anything, though, Colleen has a heart for children. For six years, she led or co-led the Urgent Action Team, which was borne out of a community needs assessment by the Network for Children. Her efforts focused on the needs of emancipating youth who are ill prepared for adulthood and facing uncertain futures.

Colleen also led the charge for the creation of the Task Force for Educational Stability for Foster Children of the Juvenile Agency Meeting. This group sought to streamline communication and processes between the courts, juvenile partners, and Kern County's 47 school districts. The ultimate goal was to stabilize the numerous school placements that foster children undergo as they grow up in foster care.

In 2011, Colleen was honored to be the CSUB Alumnus of the Year of the School of Business and Public Administration. In 2012, Colleen was chosen as the Inaugural Recipient of the Ethical Leadership Award of the Keigly Institute of Ethics at CSUB. Also in 2012, Colleen was chosen as Women of the Year in the 32nd Assembly District of California by Assemblywoman Shannon Grove. She is humbled by these accolades and hopes to draw more attention to the plight of abused children locally and statewide.

