

# NANCY & RICHARD **EATON**

**WHEN NANCY EATON** first heard about Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) at a friend's fundraiser in the 1980s, she couldn't have anticipated how her future would change.

It wasn't until several years later, however, once her children were in middle school, that Nancy circled back to CASA and jumped in herself. She began volunteering for the **Celebration of Children Gala** and, within a short time, became a chair of the annual event as it evolved into the gala we know today.

**Richard**, Nancy's husband, joined her as well, bringing his entrepreneurial spirit and contacts in the car business to CASA fundraising efforts. Through his connections, he secured donations of weekend rentals from Mercedes Benz and Bentley automobiles to auction off at fundraisers.

Together, they worked tirelessly to raise funds for CASA, spread awareness of the organization, and recruit volunteers. They held events at their home in Newport Beach to educate friends on becoming advocates and raised substantial funds through everything from birthday fundraisers on social media to organizing big-ticket gala events. After several years of fundraising efforts, **Nancy and Richard signed up to become advocates themselves.**

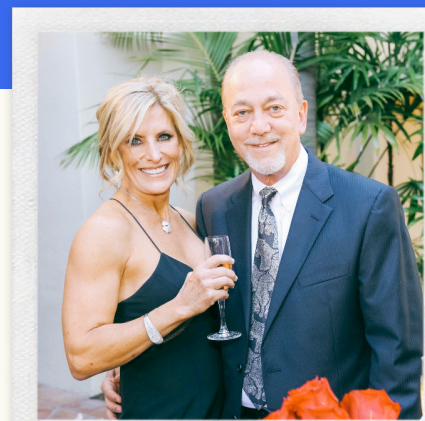
Upon completing her CASA training, Nancy was paired with 16-year-old **Lizbeth**. Although their first meeting was initially awkward, Nancy and Liz quickly developed a bond. "We went to Taco Bell for our first meeting," Nancy said. "Liz just opened up and talked for hours, sharing her story. She shared herself authentically and generously."

Nancy knew she needed to act with integrity and keep her word to best support Liz. **"The most important thing a CASA can do is show up, show up on time and do what you say you are going to do,"** Nancy said. "Having a routine is a different circumstance for a child in foster care." So, together, Nancy and Liz established comfortable rituals; they would go to the same restaurant, sit at the same booth, and the same waiter would bring them the same drinks each week.

As Nancy continued to work with Liz on budgeting, schoolwork, and self-esteem, Richard was matched with a 14-year-old boy from a wealthy Orange County community. "CASAs provide a role model that kids in foster care don't typically have," Richard said. "We can alter the view that they may have of parents or role models. **An advocate is the secret sauce, the magic ingredient, in that child's development.**" Eventually, Richard's youth reunited with his family.

Meanwhile, Nancy and Liz's time together continued through her high school years and beyond. Once Liz aged out of the system, they stayed close, and Liz has since connected with Nancy's family, as well, even joining them for pizza nights, special occasions, and holidays.

Nancy beamed about Liz's accomplishments, which have included graduating from high school, attending community college, working full time, and buying a brand-new car. "One of the things I'm most proud of is her commitment to changing her money story, having money, and making money work for her," Nancy said. "She now has an IRA and contributes substantially to it."



**CASA CELEBRATION 2016**



**CASA CELEBRATION 2012**  
Chairholders



**CELEBRATION 2011**  
with daughter Kendra

In 2021, Nancy and Richard were honored as **Advocates of the Year** at the annual CASA Celebration of Children gala. Richard opened with statistics about the difference a CASA can make in a child's life, including a 93% high school graduation rate when matched with a CASA.

Nancy shared stories from her six years of being a CASA and friend to Liz. She read from a card Liz sent her which concluded, "Thank you for always reminding me that I am powerful." Nancy then welcomed Liz to the stage where she spoke of the impact a CASA made in her life. Liz told the audience that she considers Nancy "a second mom" and finished her remarks by saying, **"You are my role model, and I look up to you. I love you."**

Nancy hopes to be matched with another CASA youth again in the future, but in the interim, both Nancy and Richard continue to think of impactful, creative ways to support CASA. As an entrepreneur and car buff, Richard shared his plan to **launch a fundraiser** in 2022 using classic cars, including his vintage 356 Porsche. His goal is to raise \$100,000 with a Porsche Rally for older 356 Porsches. The event will include a rally drive to Porsche dealerships, museums, and more. Participants will end the day with a celebration and bidding on auction items.

As for Nancy? When asked about her biggest takeaway after serving as a CASA, Nancy said, "I think it's the best job I've ever had. **It's the most important, impactful, and empowering thing I've ever done in my life.** You grow as much as the child does. It's a gift you give yourself. Here we are six years later, and wow, look at our girl. She's going to graduate; she's going to grow up and make a difference in someone else's life. For me, that's like gold."

**THANK YOU NANCY AND RICHARD!**



**LIZBETH + NANCY AT CASA CELEBRATION 2012**