



## GEORGIA COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES, INC.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### ***CASA of the Alapaha Judicial Circuit Receives Emerging Program Award of Excellence from Georgia CASA***

*Atlanta, April 14, 2010* – CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) of the Alapaha Judicial Circuit, serving Atkinson, Berrien, Clinch, Cook and Lanier counties, has received the 2010 *Emerging Program Award of Excellence* from Georgia CASA.

CASA of the Alapaha Judicial Circuit was chosen as the winner of the *Emerging Program Award of Excellence* by a selection committee of the Georgia CASA Board of Directors. The program, which began in November of 2008 under the Berrien County Collaborative, has trained and retained 22 CASA volunteers who currently serve 36 children. The program serves the state's two counties – Lanier and Berrien – that have the highest percentage rates for child abuse and neglect.

The CASA program has great working relationships with the Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS) offices and with the courts. Judge Clay Tomlinson, juvenile court judge in the Alapaha Judicial Circuit, is very supportive of the CASA program and has spoken at several CASA volunteer trainings as well as at luncheons and at club presentations on behalf of CASA.

All of these attributes and more made CASA of the Alapaha Judicial Circuit very deserving of the 2010 *Emerging Program Award of Excellence* from Georgia CASA.

CASA of the Alapaha Judicial Circuit is a member of the National CASA Association and an affiliate of Georgia CASA, Inc., which develops and supports CASA programs throughout Georgia. Through individualized attention, CASA volunteers advocate for the best interests of abused, neglected and abandoned children. Bringing urgency to a child's needs, both in and out of a courtroom, CASA volunteers promote safety, permanency and well-being through independent recommendations. Last year, over 2,000 CASA volunteers served over 8,700 children in Georgia. Currently, 48 CASA programs are located across Georgia, serving 135 counties. For more information about CASA of the Alapaha Judicial Circuit, email [elaine.douglas@berrien.k12.ga.us](mailto:elaine.douglas@berrien.k12.ga.us) or call 229-686-6576. For more information about other CASA programs in the state, visit [www.gacasa.org](http://www.gacasa.org) or call 404-874-2888 / 800-251-4012.

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