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CASA Cherokee, Program of The Children's Haven, Receives *Innovative Program Award of Excellence* from Georgia CASA

Atlanta, Aug. 6, 2019 – CASA Cherokee (Court Appointed Special Advocates), whose sponsoring agency is The Children's Haven, Inc., has received the 2019 Innovative Program Award of Excellence from Georgia CASA for innovative practices in volunteer recruitment, retention, and appreciation. The CASA program received the award at the Georgia CASA State Conference, held in Atlanta on August 3rd.

With a recent growth grant from Georgia CASA, CASA Cherokee launched intensive volunteer recruitment and engagement efforts. The program leveraged volunteer and board member connections to diversify awareness and recruitment efforts. Specific target groups were identified and board members, volunteers, and staff developed attainable recruitment activities and goals. The campaign was a success with a 30% increase in volunteers resulting in 131 active CASA volunteers.

After building up the volunteer base, CASA Cherokee then turned the focus to volunteer engagement and commitment. CASA Cherokee incorporated various immersion activities, including tours of local group homes and service providers and intimate conversations between CASA volunteers and community leaders. Additionally, CASA Cherokee hosts relevant, quality in-service trainings to ensure volunteers are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to best serve children and C2C (CASA 2 CASA) Connections engages volunteers in roundtable discussions on a regular basis. CASA volunteers were invited to become further involved in the organization by participation on program and event committees.

CASA Cherokee incorporates various efforts to show gratitude throughout the year with cards to celebrate volunteer birthdays and anniversary of service, games with prizes, an annual chili cook-off with the juvenile court judges, and annual volunteer appreciation and recognition event. Seventy percent of active volunteers have been with the program for two years or more.

CASA Cherokee is leading with innovation in volunteer recruitment, engagement, and long-term retention to serve more children in the community.

CASA is a nationwide and statewide organization with community volunteers who provide compassionate, one-on-one attention, offering children experiencing foster care hope for a brighter childhood and future that comes from growing up in a healthy, supportive, permanent family and a successful transition to adulthood with supportive connections, educational achievements, and life skills.

Last year, 2,700 CASA volunteers served over 11,000 children in Georgia. Currently, 46 CASA programs are located across Georgia, serving 151 counties. For more information about CASA Cherokee, visit www.casacherokee.org or call 770-345-3274. For more information about CASA in Georgia, visit www.gacasa.org or call 404-874-2888.

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