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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Vicki Hellums of Piedmont CASA Awarded as 2020 CASA Volunteer of the Year in Georgia

Atlanta, August 11, 2020 – Vicki Hellums, CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) volunteer with Piedmont headquartered in Jefferson, has been chosen as the 2020 Karen N. Sibley CASA Volunteer of the Year in Georgia. (The award is named in honor of the late founding board chair of Georgia CASA.) Vicki was officially recognized in conjunction with the virtual Georgia CASA Conference on August 11th.

Vicki has been a CASA advocate for 18 years, serving over 100 children during her tenure. As a CASA volunteer, she provides best interest advocacy for children in foster care. A CASA volunteer who exhibits high standards in every facet of his advocacy, Vicki consistently goes above and beyond in her service to children.

Vicki has a special skill for engaging families, encouraging them to stay involved and meet their case plan goals in order to have their children returned to them. She is warm and approachable, thoughtful, and inquisitive in her advocacy for the children she serves. The information she gathers about the children is always thorough and her reports to the juvenile court judges are complete and accurate. Above all, Vicki is present for every child she serves. The children know without a doubt they can count on her to advocate for their best interests.

On one case, Vicki worked tirelessly to ensure a family stayed together. The children had previously been placed in foster care due to parental substance abuse, but had been returned to their parents. A newborn in the family tested positive for drugs, and it appeared the mom may have relapsed. Due to Vicki's relentless research and contact with medical professionals, she found proven medical studies that a child can test positive when a mom receives an epidural during delivery. Due to the time and attention Vicki dedicated to this case, the court was made aware of an erroneous assumption and the children remained with their parents.

As a CASA volunteer, Vicki establishes a good rapport with everyone involved – including the children, families, and service providers – and is widely respected by all parties. She also encourages and is always available to other CASA volunteers with Piedmont CASA. Vicki promotes the urgent need for CASA volunteers in the local community serving as an ambassador and trusted supporter.

Vicki has shared that she feels like she gains so much more than she gives in her role as a CASA volunteer serving children and their families in her community. Vicki is truly an everyday hero, advocating both in and out of the courtroom to ensure children have their best interests met.

Georgia CASA, Inc., develops and supports affiliate CASA programs throughout Georgia. CASA has 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 affiliate programs are located across Georgia, serving 156 counties. To contact Piedmont CASA, visit www.piedmontcasa.org or call 470-429-5055. For more information about CASA in Georgia, visit www.gacasa.org or call 404-874-2888 or 800-251-4012.

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