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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Northeast Georgia CASA Receives *Established Program Award of Excellence* from Georgia CASA

Atlanta, Aug. 28, 2020 – Northeast Georgia CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates), Inc., headquartered in Toccoa and serving Elbert, Franklin, Habersham, Hart, Madison, Oglethorpe, Rabun, and Stephens counties has received the 2020 Established Program Award of Excellence from Georgia CASA.

Northeast Georgia CASA was established 16 years ago and is a model CASA program in the state. Northeast Georgia CASA serves two judicial circuit with six staff and 70 CASA volunteers. Highlighted strengths are strong nonprofit management, board governance, fund development, community engagement, staff expertise, team spirit, and volunteer engagement and training.

Most recently, Northeast Georgia CASA has been a model for adapting in the COVID-19 work environment. Technology, to include virtual trainings, meetings, and court hearings, has been successfully implemented and used by the CASA volunteers, 75% of whom are 60+ years of age. This is a testament to their dedication to serving children by overcoming any possible technology challenges. Also during this time, Northeast Georgia CASA has ensured CASA continues to be a vital part of court hearings and staffings with the Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS).

Northeast Georgia CASA has a strong public presence in the community with consistent public relations efforts, including outdoor ads, social media highlights, and newspaper editorial submissions. CASA volunteers participate in ongoing training opportunities to continue to strengthen their advocacy for children, and are appreciated regularly by the CASA staff for the work they do.

Northeast Georgia CASA's board membership, expertise, and structure provide stability, influence, connections, and experience needed for long-term success. Northeast Georgia CASA maintains diverse funding sources as a result of commitment to fundraising, donor cultivation, and stewardship from both the board and leadership.

Above all, the CASA program keeps a focus on serving the children and supporting the CASA volunteers who provide best interest advocacy to these children. Judge Warren C. Caswell of the Northern Judicial Circuit shares in the recognition of Northeast Georgia CASA's continued work: "I am happy to see a richly deserving program being recognized for the invaluable work it does. The CASA volunteers with Northeast Georgia CASA are consistently some of the best prepared and informed individuals in the courtroom. I can rely on them to be impartial and comprehensive in their advocacy. Their reports help immensely with the findings I am required to make."

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 156 counties. For more information about Northeast Georgia CASA, visit www.northeastgacasa.org or call 706-886-1098. For more information about CASA in Georgia, visit www.gacasa.org or call 404-874-2888.

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