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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Atlantic Area CASA Receives *Established Program Award of Excellence* from Georgia CASA

Atlanta, Aug. 13, 2022 – Atlantic Area CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) has received the 2022 Established Program Award of Excellence from Georgia CASA.

Since its inception in 1999, Atlantic Area CASA has grown in financial support, CASA volunteer retention and diversity, community involvement and support, and children served. Over 75% of the children in foster care in Bryan, Evans, Liberty, Long, McIntosh, and Tattnall counties now have a CASA volunteer.

When Atlantic Area CASA's first executive director, Irene McCall, retired in 2013, Petula Gomillion was hired as director and has since led the CASA program. She recently served for three years as a Georgia CASA board member, representing affiliate CASA programs in Georgia. When needed, Atlantic Area CASA stepped up to assist with the supervision and re-establishment of the CASA program in the Waycross Judicial Circuit. Additionally, the CASA program's staff members have always been strong supporters of both Georgia CASA and National CASA/GAL Association.

Atlantic Area CASA has maintained financial stability and funding with core funders plus an increased level of community support through annual fundraisers. Recently, the CASA program has received increased funding from United Way of the Coastal Empire and Coastal Georgia and expanded its grant proposals to private foundations.

Atlantic Area CASA is very involved and visible in the local communities it serves, including membership in all six counties' Chambers of Commerce and Family Connections. The CASA program staff serve as members of various local child welfare related organizations and have positive working relationships with the local Department of Family and Children Services offices and juvenile court judges.

Atlantic Area CASA is an established affiliate that has steadily grown and developed into the CASA program it is today.

Georgia CASA, Inc., strengthens and supports court-sanctioned, affiliate CASA programs that empower community volunteers who advocate for abused or neglected children and contributes to advancements within the child welfare system. CASA volunteers provide compassionate, one-on-one attention, offering children experiencing foster care the opportunity to thrive and reach their full potential with the support of permanent connections to family.

Last year, 2,700 CASA volunteers served over 10,000 children in Georgia. Currently, 44 affiliate programs are located across Georgia, serving 156 counties. To contact Coastal Plain CASA, visit <https://www.cpcasa.org/> or call 229-386-9765. For more information about CASA in Georgia, visit <https://www.gacasa.org/> or call 404-874-2888 or 800-251-4012.

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