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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Coastal Plain CASA Receives *Innovative Program Award of Excellence* from Georgia CASA

Atlanta, Aug. 13, 2022 – Coastal Plain CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) has received the 2022 Innovative Program Award of Excellence from Georgia CASA for innovation in growth since the CASA affiliate program’s inception in 2000.

Coastal Plain CASA serves Irwin, Tift, Turner, and Worth counties and has a prominent office location in downtown Tifton which affords the opportunity to increase its name recognition among the public. In 2020, the office expanded by adding a training room and now trains all its CASA volunteers in one location. In 2021, in partnership with Turner County, Coastal Plain CASA added a satellite office in Ashburn and now serves over 75% of the children in foster care in Turner County.

Kristin Morrison, Coastal Plain CASA’s Executive Director, worked in conjunction with Cindy Evers, a long-serving CASA volunteer and director of the local child advocacy center, to create the annual Alliance for Children Summit to address the need for quality training in the area on issues facing the child welfare sector. In existence for several years, the Summit maxes out each year with 200 registrants. Coastal Plain CASA has strong working relationships with the court and in 2019, the CASA program helped with the training and recruitment of the newly implemented Citizen Panel Review. Currently, the CASA program is helping to construct and implement a new accountability court.

Over the past five years, Coastal Plain CASA’s funding base has significantly increased, including a cash raffle sponsored by many local businesses that raises over \$30,000 each year. The winner is announced at a festival in front of 5,000 people, helping to further spread awareness about the CASA program. With Coastal Plain CASA’s increased funding, additional staff positions have been added, helping to more than double the number of CASA volunteers since 2015 and increase the CASA program’s presence in the community, including through social media.

With the innovative growth Coastal Plain CASA has experienced, both staff and volunteers alike indicate a high level of satisfaction being part of the CASA program. CASA volunteers are strongly supported by the staff and all take pride in being a part of Coastal Plain CASA.

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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