



Georgia Court Appointed Special Advocates, Inc.
75 Marietta St. NW
Suite 404
Atlanta, GA 30303

(p) 404.874.2888
(f) 404.874.2889
800.251.4012

www.gacasa.org

Contacts: Rachelle Mosely
Georgia CASA
404.874.2888 or 800.251.4012
rmosely@gacasa.org

Melanie Davis
CASA of the Appalachian Judicial Circuit
706-276-2272
director@appalachiancasa.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CASA of the Appalachian Judicial Circuit Receives Established Program Award of Excellence from Georgia CASA

Atlanta, Georgia, August 18, 2023 – CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) of the Appalachian Judicial Circuit, serving Fannin, Gilmer, and Pickens counties, has received the 2023 Established Program Award of Excellence from Georgia CASA. The award was officially received at the Georgia CASA Conference in Atlanta on August 12th.

CASA of the Appalachian Judicial Circuit, established in 1993 as part of the Pickens Council of Child Abuse, transformed into a non-profit organization in 1995. The CASA program adopted a court-sponsored structure in 1997, led by Judge Brenda Weaver and an advisory board. Dianne Scoggins served as the director for over 22 years until her retirement in 2018.

Today, Melanie Davis leads a team of five, overseeing nearly 50 CASA volunteers. Most recently, CASA of the Appalachian Judicial Circuit served 76% of the children in foster care, advocating for 183 out of 240 children in care in 2022.

“They are so supportive of each other,” said Judge Patricia King of Appalachian Family Treatment Court. “They are appreciative of their volunteers. Even when the case is difficult, the staff is supportive and there for the volunteers, from drafting the report through the court hearing.”

CASA of the Appalachian Judicial Circuit maintains strong ties with DFCS and other stakeholders, promoting communication and collaboration through events such as Coffee with CASA. The CASA program enjoys a positive relationship with the court, with Judge Patricia King demonstrating consistent support for CASA volunteers’ role in dependency cases. CASA staff actively participate in community events and engage with civic groups to expand their network and recruit volunteers.

CASA of the Appalachian Judicial Circuit is an established affiliate that has steadily grown and developed into the CASA program it is today.

About Georgia CASA: Forty-six affiliate CASA programs have been established throughout the state since Georgia CASA was founded 35 years ago. This year brings Georgia CASA’s final geographic expansion to reach children in foster care in all 159 counties throughout the state of Georgia. Each CASA affiliate program engages the community to train volunteer advocates. Volunteers are

everyday citizens who offer individualized attention and best-interest advocacy for children in foster care. The CASA organization is the only model of this kind, built around one child and one compassionate, highly trained adult advocate. For more information about Georgia CASA or to find an affiliate program near you, visit <https://www.gacasa.org/>. For more information about the CASA affiliate program serving the Appalachian Judicial Circuit, visit <https://www.appalachiancasa.com/>.

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