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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Bonnie Tappan of Athens-Oconee CASA Awarded as 2025 CASA Volunteer of the Year in Georgia**

*Atlanta, Georgia, August 26, 2025* – Bonnie Tappan, CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) volunteer with Athens-Oconee CASA, has been chosen for the 2025 Karen N. Sibley CASA Volunteer of the Year Award in Georgia for her outstanding dedication to the organization. Named in honor of the late founding board chair of Georgia CASA, the Karen N. Sibley CASA Volunteer of the Year Award is bestowed to a CASA volunteer that exemplifies the organization's core values – collaboration, compassion, and accountability – in an outstanding way. Bonnie was officially awarded at the Georgia CASA Conference in Atlanta on August 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Since joining Athens-Oconee CASA in 2016, Bonnie has advocated for 23 children, and many more during her time as a CASA volunteer in Indiana. Known for her compassion, commitment, and fierce advocacy, Bonnie takes on even the most complex cases with dedication and heart.

From securing hearing aids for children with genetic hearing loss to preventing a child's expulsion by working directly with school officials, Bonnie's advocacy makes a lasting difference. A child once said, "She is the best because she helps make sure I'm happy and have everything I need in my life."

In addition to her own casework, Bonnie serves as a Peer Coordinator and is Athens-Oconee CASA's only Spanish-speaking volunteer, helping both children and fellow advocates navigate language and cultural barriers. She has supported 19 children through the supervision of other CASA volunteers and leads a monthly peer support group.

Bonnie is described as a "firecracker advocate" who never accepts "no" when it comes to advocating for her CASA children. Foster parents, DFCS case managers, and legal professionals alike praise her empathy, effectiveness, and unwavering support. As one foster parent shared, "She is consistently walking the journey of foster parenting with us. If I could only use one word to describe Bonnie, it would be compassionate. She lives in the peaks and pits with us. She takes the time to celebrate accomplishments and provide empathy and thoughtful support in the valleys."

Bonnie's unwavering commitment and countless hours of dedication make her a very deserving recipient of the 2025 Karen N. Sibley CASA Volunteer of the Year award.

**About Georgia CASA:** Forty-seven affiliate CASA programs, serving all 159 counties in the state, have been established since Georgia CASA was founded in 1988. Each affiliate CASA 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 Athens-Oconee CASA, visit <http://www.athensoconeeCasa.org>. ###